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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER

CONFESSING ONE FAITH

**TOWARDS AN ECUMENICAL EXPLICATION OF THE
APOSTOLIC FAITH AS EXPRESSED IN THE
NICENE-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED (381)**

Faith and Order Paper No. 140

Geneva 1987

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P R E F A C E

The ecumenical study document **CONFESSING ONE FAITH** is the result of the first stage of work of the Faith and Order study **TOWARDS A COMMON EXPRESSION OF THE APOSTOLIC FAITH TODAY**. Because of its provisional character we have called the text a **STUDY DOCUMENT**. This provisional text will be discussed again and revised at the next meeting of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission in August 1989. In order to prepare for this discussion and to contribute to a revision of the text on a broader basis the Standing Commission on Faith and Order agreed, at its meeting in August 1987 at Madrid, to make the text available to a wider circle. The text is being sent to the members of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission, ecumenical officers of churches, ecumenical councils, commissions and institutes and to all who express an interest in contributing to the further development of the document. Consequently we invite comments and suggestions on this provisional text. These comments and suggestions will then be presented to the Plenary Commission in 1989.

We hope that after the revision in 1989 the document will have reached a stage that will allow us to publish and transmit it officially to the churches, but still for their study and reaction.

We are grateful to all the people who have contributed to the development of this study document, especially to the Apostolic Faith Steering Group and its Moderator, Rev. Prof. Jean Tillard op, the Director the Secretariat, Rev. Dr Günther Gassmann, and the two Executive Secretaries responsible for this study, Rev. Dr Hans-Georg Link (1982-July 1986) and Rev. Dr Gennadios Limouris (since July 1986).

Standing Commission on Faith and Order

August 1987
Madrid, Spain

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INTRODUCTION

A. The Study Document

1. The following document is a preliminary result of the Faith and Order Commission's project "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today". This study seeks to render a major contribution to the movement towards manifesting the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ. The first steps in developing the project were taken at the Commission meeting in Bangalore (1978). This study document has been developed from 1984 on by means of a series of international consultations, extensive discussion at the 1985 meeting of the Faith and Order Commission at Stavanger/Norway, consideration in the Faith and Order Standing Commission, several sessions of the Steering Group for the Apostolic Faith study (see Appendix I, p. 2) and contributions from local/national study groups and from individuals .

2. The document moves towards an ecumenical explication of the apostolic faith on the basis of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381) and its biblical foundation. It explicates some of the fundamental affirmations of the faith of the Church through the ages and relates them to issues and challenges which confront the churches in the contemporary world. In so doing it seeks to express basic perspectives for common Christian witness today and opens up possibilities for mutual enrichment of the different Christian traditions on their way towards confessing together the one apostolic faith.

3. A number of church commissions, study groups and conferences have already begun to participate in the work of explicating the apostolic faith. This study document is intended to stimulate further and broaden this cooperation so that the document can be improved during the coming years with the help of insights, comments and suggestions from a wider process of reflection in the ecumenical community. Working together within such a process will enable us to approach our common calling of expressing the apostolic faith with courage and confidence.

B. The Task

4. The study project of the Faith and Order Commission "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today" serves the primary function and purpose of the World Council of Churches "to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship" (Constitution of the WCC, III.1). The common confession of the apostolic faith is one of the essential conditions and elements of visible unity,

together with mutual recognition of baptism, eucharist and ministry, together with common structures for decision-making and teaching authoritatively. This makes it vital for the churches committed to the ecumenical movement to re-appropriate their common roots by entering into a dialogue on the fundamental affirmations of the apostolic faith.

5. At the same time this study project is also related to the calling and challenge of the churches to witness and confess their faith together. In order to be able to respond to this calling, the churches, though living in different Christian traditions and in diverse cultural, political and religious contexts, need to re-appropriate and express their common basis in the apostolic faith. This will provide the basis for their common witness to and confession of the saving purpose of the Triune God for all humanity and creation.

6. The study project on the Apostolic Faith will not elaborate a new ecumenical creed. Its aim is rather to serve both the endeavours of the churches towards the manifestation of the unity given in Jesus Christ and their calling to confess their faith in their common mission and service to the world. Thus, as the 1983 Vancouver Assembly of the WCC stated, "the churches would share a common understanding of the apostolic faith, and be able to confess this Message together in ways understandable, reconciling and liberating to their contemporaries" (Gathered for Life, p. 45).

7. The Apostolic Faith study is related to the two other major Faith and Order programmes. It seeks to provide a wider basis and framework for the Lima document with its ecclesiological focus on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry and takes up insights from this text and from the responses of the churches to it. The ecclesiological focus of the study on The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community will be enriched by the broader trinitarian perspective on God's salvific action in creation, redemption and fulfilment set out in the Apostolic Faith study. In its reference to present day challenges the Apostolic Faith study will profit from the reflection of the Unity/Renewal study on specific situations of human brokenness crying out for renewal.

8. The title of the project "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today" refers, first, to the ecumenical commitment of entering into a dialogue and movement towards expressing together the same apostolic faith that was expressed in Holy Scriptures and summarized in the Creeds of the Early Church. This faith should be

expressed, that is witnessed to, confessed, lived out and celebrated in common, both corporately and together as churches of different traditions. This common expression of the apostolic faith must be related to the situations and challenges of our world today.

9. More specifically, the term apostolic faith as used in this study does not refer only to a single fixed formula or a specific moment in Christian history. It points to the dynamic, historical (geschichtlich) reality of the central affirmations of the Christian faith. These affirmations are grounded in the witness of the people of the Old Testament and in the normative testimony, reflection in the New Testament, of the apostles and others who proclaimed the Gospel in the early days (apostolic age) and of their community. These central affirmations were further clarified in the undivided church of the first centuries. This apostolic faith is expressed and lived out by the churches in various ways, i.e. in individual and common confession, in preaching and sacraments, in formalized and received credal statements, in decisions of councils and in confessional texts. Ongoing theological explication renders a service to the confessing community by clarifying this faith. Having its centre in the confession of the Triune God, revealed in Jesus Christ, this apostolic faith is to be ever confessed anew and interpreted in the context of changing times and places in continuity with the original witness of the apostolic community and with the faithful explication of that witness throughout the ages.

C. Explication

10. The Faith and Order Commission, at Lima 1982, decided to develop the study of the Apostolic Faith in three aspects: common recognition, explication and confession of the apostolic faith. Later, at a consultation in Rome in October 1983, it was recognized that the explication should be the starting point of the project and central part of the study because it is the presupposition for reaching the goal of a common recognition and confession of the apostolic faith in our time and world.

11. The Faith and Order Commission decided also, in order to identify the fundamentals of the apostolic faith which should be explicated in this ecumenical endeavour, to use the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 (in its original version) as the theological basis and methodological tool for the explication of the apostolic faith. This decision was taken in the conviction that this Creed represents an exemplary and authentic summary of the apostolic faith which is officially recognized and used by many churches within the ecumenical movement. The

explication of the Nicene Creed is viewed in the light also of the Apostles' Creed, used as well by many churches in their life and worship. The main content of these Creeds is also present in the thinking and life of churches which do not officially recognize these Creeds or use them in their teaching and worship. The decision was also taken in the recognition that the Nicene Creed served as an expression of unity of the Early Church and is, therefore, also of great importance for our contemporary quest for the unity of Christ's Church. Related to this decision was the awareness that this Creed needs to be explicated in relation to its biblical foundation and in recognition of its time and place in the development of Christian doctrine.

12. The affirmations of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed are rooted in the witness of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and must be tested against them within the context of the tradition of the church. Accordingly, the explication will seek to respond to the question as to what degree and in which form the fundamentals of the apostolic faith as witnessed to by the Holy Scriptures, proclaimed in the tradition of the Church, and expressed in the three articles of the Creed, can be commonly understood and expressed by churches of different confessional traditions, living in different cultural, social, political and religious contexts.

13. This explication seeks to indicate the relevance of basic convictions of the Christian faith in the face of some particular challenges of our time and world. The explication thus integrates biblical, historical and contemporary perspectives and relates doctrinal affirmations to ethical problems.

14. The explication seeks to discover and formulate basic insights which can be understood and accepted by Christians from different traditions, but does not pretend to solve all theological differences.

D. Structure

15. The text of the explication is structured in three parts following the three articles of the Creed. Each part consists of sections focusing on the main themes of each article. Further sub-divisions correspond to specific phrases in the text of the Creed that need explication.

16. Each section begins with introductory paragraphs which indicate basic affirmations as well as main challenges to be faced with regard to the respective theme. Sub-section I presents historical and biblical

interpretations. It starts by quoting the respective passages of the Nicene and the Apostles' Creeds. It continues with a few explanatory notes on the credal formulations and concludes with biblical aspects which are foundational to the respective themes. Sub-section II concentrates on the "explication for today". It follows the phrases of the Nicene Creed, confronts the subject with challenges of today and tries to interpret the respective aspect of the apostolic faith for our present time.

17. In some places commentaries are added. They contain either additional historical background information or theological details or still controversial themes. Underlinings indicate the themes of the paragraphs; and sometimes also the focus of the interpretation. The paragraphs of the whole explication are numbered in order to facilitate their quotation. The Appendices were prepared by Rev. Dr. Gennadios Limouris and staff.

THE NICENE-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED

Text of 381 A.D.

Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἓνα Θεόν,
πατέρα παντοκράτορα,
ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς,
ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων·

καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν,
τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ,
τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων,
φῶς ἐκ φωτός,
Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ,
γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα,
ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί,
δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο·
τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν
κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν
καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου
καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου,
καὶ ἐνιανθρωπήσαντα,
σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου
καὶ παθόντα καὶ ταφέντα
καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ
κατὰ τὰς γραφάς,
καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς,
καὶ καθεζόμενον ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ πατρὸς,
καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς·
οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται τέλος·

καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον,
τὸ κύριον καὶ ζωοποιόν,
τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον,
τὸ σὺν πατρί καὶ υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον,
τὸ λαλῆσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν.
Εἰς μίαν ἁγίαν καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν.
Ὁμολογοῦμεν ἓν βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.
Προσδοκῶμεν ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν
καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος. Ἀμήν.

We believe in one God,*
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us all (man) and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by (the power of) the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered (death) and was buried.
On the third day he rose (again) from the dead
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father.
Who, with the Father and the Son, is worshipped
and glorified,
who has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We (acknowledge) confess one baptism for the forgiveness
of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the (world) age to come. Amen.

● Greek text in *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*, eds H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzger, 32nd ed., Freiburg, 1963, p.66, No. 150.
● English text in *Prayers We Have in Common*, agreed liturgical texts prepared by the International Consultation on English Texts, 2nd revised ed., Philadelphia, 1975, p.6.

* In the text of the **Explication** some formulations of the English translation (in brackets) were slightly changed in order to better correspond to the original text.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

Credo in Deum

Patrem omnipotentem,
creatorem caeli et terrae.

et in Iesum Christum,

Filium eius unicum, Dominum
nostrum,
qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto,
natus ex Maria virgine,
passus sub Pontio Pilato,
crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus,
descendit ad inferna,
tertia die resurrexit a mortuis,
ascendit ad caelos,
sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris
omnipotentis,
inde venturus est
iudicare vivos et mortuos.

Credo in Spiritum Sanctum,

sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam,
sanctorum communionem,
remissionem peccatorum,
carnis resurrectionem,
et vitam aeternam. Amen.

I believe in God,

the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the
Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the
Father.
He will come again to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

● Latin text in *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*, eds H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, 32nd ed., Freiburg, 1963, p.28, No. 30.

● English text in *Prayers We Have In Common*, agreed liturgical texts prepared by the International Consultation on English Texts, 2nd revised ed., Philadelphia, 1975, p.4.

E X P L I C A T I O N

WE BELIEVE

1. The Nicene Creed begins with a confident affirmation "We believe in" (pisteuomen eis) referring to Father, Son and Holy Spirit and to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

2. The first person plural "we believe" of the Nicene Creed differs from the "I believe" of the Apostle's Creed, of baptismal and some eucharistic liturgies. In baptism individuals, or those who speak on their behalf, respond to God's prevenient act of grace in a personal testimony of faith. The believer through water and in the power of the Holy Spirit is baptised into Christ's death and resurrection and brought into the communion of the church. The individual's confession of faith, however, is made in communion with the faith of the whole church. Where baptism is conferred within the context of the liturgy of a local church, the community responds: "this is the faith of the church, this is our faith".

3. The Nicene Creed is the confession of faith which belongs to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. In the Nicene Creed the individual joins with all the baptised gathered together in each and every place, now and throughout the ages, in the church's proclamation of faith: "we believe in". The confession "we believe in" articulates not only the trust of individuals in God's grace, but it also affirms the trust of the whole church in God. There is a bond of communion between those who join together in making a common confession of their faith. However, as long as the Creed is confessed by churches which are not united one with another the communion of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church is impaired.

4. Just as in baptism the confession of faith is made in response to God's grace, so too the church's on-going confession is made in response to God's grace and love, most particularly vouchsafed in the preached word and celebrated sacraments of the church. Hence the church's liturgy is the proper context for the church's confession of faith.

5. Faith, which finds expression in the confession of the Creed, is a gift of God through the Holy Spirit. It involves the free submission of the believer, complete confidence and trust, waiting upon God's help and reliance upon the proofs which God has given of his love in creation, in redemption and in sanctification.

Commentary:

In the West Augustine pointed to three aspects of the act of believing: to believe that God exists (*credere Deum*), to believe God (*credere Deo*) and to believe in God (*credere in Deum*). "Believing in" encompasses the first two, but goes beyond them and involves the personal commitment of completely entrusting oneself to God. This is also evident in the Apostles' Creed which uses "credere in" only in relation to the three persons of the Trinity and not with reference to the church. The Nicene Creed, however, uses "believe in" also with reference to the church. In Greek pisteuomen eis has a broader meaning indicating simply the object intended in the act of belief.

PART I

WE BELIEVE IN ONE GOD

A. THE ONE GOD

6. Christians believe that "the One true God", who made himself known to Israel, has revealed himself supremely in the "one whom he has sent", namely Jesus Christ (John 17:3)(1); that, in Christ, God has reconciled the world to himself (2 Cor. 5:19); and that, by his Holy Spirit, God brings new and eternal life to all who through Christ put their trust in him.

7. This faith in a single, universal God who is creator, redeemer and sustainer of everything faces the challenge of false gods created by human desires wherever human beings put their ultimate trust in something other than the creator of heaven and earth. There are also those who doubt whether there is any reality beyond the visible world, providing the source of its being and continuing life: for them a conception of God is no more than an expression and projection of human wishes and fears. Even when it is acknowledged that there are powers transcending the visible reality of the world the question is, can it be maintained that there is only one such power and should that power be conceived as purely transcendent or also as immanent in the world and how can these aspects be reconciled?

8. Many who agree with Christians in a belief in one God find the trinitarian affirmation of Christians impossible. For Jews and Muslims particularly, the Christian notion of the Triune God has been a stumbling block because it seems to deny monotheism. There are also Christians today who consider that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity at the very least requires fresh interpretation and even linguistic revision. Moreover there is widespread popular neglect and misunderstanding of the doctrine. It is sometimes explained "modalistically", as if it meant that God is really one, but because of human limitations is understood in three different ways; or "tri-theistically", as though worship of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit were three separable and different kinds of worship. Such challenges ask for contemporary work of clarification.

(1) Bible passages are quoted from the Revised Standard Version.

I. THE CREED AND ITS BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

(a) The text of the Creed

9. "We believe in one God".

(AC : "I believe in God")(1)

10. The Nicene Creed begins with confessing belief in one God. The theme of the oneness of God is in turn expanded in the three articles of the Creed in a trinitarian way. The first article stresses belief in One God, the Father; the second, in One Lord, the Son of the Father; and the third, in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, who proceeds from the Father. Thus the One God is understood in terms of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Father being the source of all divinity. Corresponding to the oneness of the triune God, the Creed affirms that there is also only one church and one baptism (cf. Eph. 4:4-6). Thus the Creed emphasises oneness in all the three articles.

Commentary:

From their Jewish heritage Christians have known since the start that "there is no God but one". The church of the second century affirmed against Marcion the unity of the God who creates and redeems. It took time before the church gave a fully reasoned and well articulated account of the relation between the "one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist" and the "one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (1 Cor. 8:6). The decisive moment came with the Arian controversy. The Council of Nicea (325) affirmed the Son to be "from the substance of the Father" (ek tes ousias tou Patros) and "consubstantial with the Father" (homousios to Patri). After the subsequent controversy of Pneumatomachianism the Council of Constantinople (381) also declared the Lordship of the Holy Spirit "who proceeds from the Father and who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified". In all this the church had no intention of destroying the unity of God; rather, the One God was understood as triune on the basis of his redemptive activity in history. Baptism continued to take place in the single name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In subsequent centuries different interpretations were advanced concerning the ultimate principle of unity in the trinity, namely, whether this was to be

(1) AC = Apostles' Creed

found in the divine being (ousia) or in the person (hypostasis) of the Father or in the inter-relatedness and mutual indwelling of the three persons in their communion with one another. However, both East and West, have always confessed in worship the unity of God and the distinction of persons with equal insistence; and it is in worship that the personal character of the triune God is most apparent.

On the whole Nicene theology stressed at the same time the uniqueness of each of the three persons (hypostases) in the one God revealed throughout the history of salvation, and their unity in communion (koinonia) in the one divine being. Today care needs to be taken with such words as "substance" (which now often suggests material, subject to instrumental measurement), "essence" (which may recall a discredited metaphysics) or "person" (which may give rise to an individual subject, an atomistic centre of consciousness). Even contemporary trinitarian theology continues to discuss, and even more so than in some earlier periods, how the oneness of God together with the three "persons" can be appropriately expressed. There is agreement, however, that an adequate and exhaustive rational account of the mystery of the triune God celebrated in the liturgy of the church remains beyond human comprehension. Trinitarian doctrine and its language can only give the reasons for confessing the three persons as well as the one God.

(b) Biblical foundation

11. In the course of its history Israel came to believe in the uniqueness of God. This finds its classical expression in the "Shema Israel": "Hear, O Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:4f.) It is most emphatically expounded in the prophecies of Second Isaiah where the LORD, the Creator and Redeemer, is confessed explicitly as the only God, not only for Israel, but for all peoples: other gods are mere idols: "There is no other god besides me; a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none besides me. Turn to me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other" (Isa. 45:21-22).

12. The Old Testament emphasis on the uniqueness of God was continued in the New Testament. Jesus affirmed the faith of Israel concerning the one God. He dismissed

Satan by citing the Scriptures: "You shall worship the LORD your God, and him only shall you serve" (Matt. 4:10 par.; cf. Deut. 6:13). He endorsed the "Hear, O Israel" as the first and great commandment and the way to eternal life (Mark 12:29; Matt. 22:37; Luke 10:27).

13. However, the New Testament also makes clear that this God is in a unique relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus is called his Son (Luke 1:32-33; Mark 1:11 pars.). Jesus addresses this God as "Father", using the intimate word "Abba" (Mark 14:36). Jesus is the Father's own, beloved and only Son (John 1:18; 3:16; Rom. 8:32; Col. 1:13). Whoever has seen the Son has seen the Father (John 14:9), for the Father and the Son are "one" (John 10:30; 17:11). While remaining distinct, the Father and the Son "dwell" in each other (John 17:21).

14. At the same time the New Testament also links the Spirit - "who proceeds from the Father" (John 15:26) - with the Son (cf. para. 189). According to the prayer of the exalted Christ, the Father sends the Holy Spirit into the world, "the other Paraclete", the Spirit who "makes alive" and guides into all the truth (John 16:7). All three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are named together in the early apostolic preaching and writing (2 Cor. 13:13; Eph. 4:4-6).

II. EXPLICATION FOR TODAY

The One God in Three Persons

15. The particularity of Christian faith in the one God is based on the revelation of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Therefore, the divine "economy", the history of salvation in creation, reconciliation and final salvation, is at the basis of the trinitarian faith. At the same time, the one God is in all eternity the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Economic and eternal trinity are inseparable from each other. This is why Christians confess the one God only as communion of the three divine persons.

16. It is in the divine economy that the separation and alienation of the world through sin and evil from God is overcome through the reconciling work of the Son and the transfiguring presence of the Spirit. In the mystery of this divine economy of salvation the one God is revealed as life and love communicating himself to his creatures. God the Father reconciles the world to himself through the incarnation, ministry and suffering of his eternal Son. In the Son God shares the human condition even to death, in order to offer to humanity forgiveness of sin,

resurrection and eternal life (John 3:16). Through the Spirit God raised the crucified one to a new and imperishable life that will bring about the final transfiguration and glorification of our lives and the whole creation in the eschatological future. By the proclamation of this good news the Spirit kindles even now faith, love and hope in the hearts of those who receive the gospel, as even before the incarnation of the Son he encouraged the hope for a future salvation of humanity.

17. The incarnate Son reveals that in God's eternal glory, before all time and history, his divine life is mutual self-giving and communion, that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). This eternal love and communion between Father and Son is revealed in the cross of Christ and in his resurrection through the power of the Spirit. Cross and resurrection cannot be understood apart from the trinitarian communion of Father, Son and Spirit, nor can the Trinity be understood apart from the cross and the resurrection. The cross is the affirmation of a love which is stronger than sin and death, and the resurrection confirms that this divine love is indeed and will be victorious.

18. The eternal source of that living trinitarian communion of love is God the Father. But the Father was never without the Son, nor was he ever deprived of his Spirit. The mutual indwelling of the three persons is the seal of their unity. God's eternal life and glory is in the free giving of the persons in mutual communion to each other. The divine unity originates from the Father as its source, but is preserved in the obedience of the Son and in the testimony of the Spirit glorifying the Son in the Father and the Father in the Son.

19. The eternal communion of love is at work in the creation of the world as well as in its redemption and in its sanctification and ultimate glorification. Although the work of creation is attributed specifically to the Father, the work of redemption to the Son, and the work of sanctification and glorification to the Spirit, the work of each of the trinitarian persons implies the presence and co-operation of all three. Thus God is only one. None of them has a life of its own apart from the others.

20. The oneness of the triune God perceived in the act of faith - faith understood as ultimate and unconditional trust - provides the basis for the unity and the identity of the human person as well as for the unity of the natural universe and social order. While in modern times the unity of the social order has been largely based on human nature and the unity of the natural order on demonstrable physical phenomena the Christian affirms that

the basis of unity and identity of all creation ultimately rests in the triune God.

Transcendence and Immanence

21. The Christian belief in the one God as trinitarian unity and communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit has been understood from early times as comprehending transcendence as well as immanence. The transcendent God is at the same time immanent, present in his creation that originates through his Spirit, the source of life, and through his Son, the eternal Word. Although the eternal communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is prior to the existence of any creature, the presence of the triune God also surrounds and pervades every creature. The triune God is present in the depth of our existence, even in our alienation from our creator. This creative, sustaining and saving presence of God does not destroy the creature's freedom, but on the contrary enables it to enjoy this creaturely independence to actively preserve it and to engage in acts of devotion to others and to God. The element of independence includes on the other hand also the possibility of denying the creator and his creation.

22. The infinite God also remains transcendent of his creation, dwelling in an unattainable light. However, if he were only transcendent, he would be a mere correlate to the world, imprisoned in his distinction from it. In his transcendence, God is the source of novelty in his creation, urging it towards a final fulfilment of created existence in communion with God and among the creatures themselves. At the same time, God is intimately present to each one of his creatures, but never in such a way as to dissolve his transcendence. The creatures, in their turn, will never be absorbed into God, not even in their eschatological glorification. Our acceptance of our difference from God remains the condition of even our eschatological communion with him in praising him as creator and redeemer of his creation. Therefore, the belief that God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28) does not entail pantheism.

Challenges posed by and to atheism, general religiosity and secularism

23. From the beginning faith in one God has been challenged by various forms of atheism. There are atheists who always consider that belief in God, far from being the way of life and salvation, constitutes a threat to the freedom and dignity of humankind; in this case, belief in God is seen as an illusion arising from psychological, ideological, sociological, or even economic

grounds. Atheism may today be seen at its best as a challenge to believers to purify their belief in God. On the other hand, confronted with the problems of surviving in our world today, some people are unable to find any divine or religious frame of reference to life. As a result, some of them place their hope for betterment in life of humankind itself, whilst others abandon the quest and retreat into utopianism or nihilism.

24. In the world "there are many 'gods'" (1 Cor. 8:5). According to modern phenomenology of religion, a god is an object of worship, prayer and trust; it is what constitutes for an individual or a group the supreme being and their ultimate value. At its best, religion is the serious and sincere search for the good and for the fulness of life. Due to human sinfulness, however, religion often represents serious distortions that lead to idolatry, which, in the last analysis, is nothing but selfishness and self-exaltation in opposition to all else (Rom. 1:19ff.; Phil. 3:19).

25. The world of finite things lacks ultimate meaning and purpose without a transcendent reality. Throughout history men and women of every race and culture have found the basis for their existence and the meaning of their life in the certainty that God exists. God is the source of a sense of moral imperative in a world where otherwise men and women would not find ultimate authoritative standards of individual behaviour, although all human beings share in some form of conscience. Belief in God is also a source of hope in the face of perishableness, suffering, failure and strife, a hope surpassing everything that can be achieved by human efforts, but also inspiring efforts at creating at least provisional forms of justice and social order and conditions that allow for a life of human dignity.

26. While the religious traditions of humankind are indeed all testimonies of human experience and thought, they support the fact that human nature is inescapably religious. This means that to be fully human includes a religious dimension of life. This is not necessarily expressed in the language of "religion" in the specific sense, but may consist in the awareness of some ultimate concern, or it may express itself in the form of ideological claims and commitments. It is in religions proper, on the basis of some experience of divine reality, that this human condition becomes explicit. Religions are not unnecessary inventions of beings whose primordial nature could adequately be described in purely secular terms as atheists assume. The religious dimension belongs to the roots of the distinctively human condition: so the fulness of being human is missed where the

awareness of a reality transcending everything finite is obscured or extinguished. Instead human fulness is promised whenever this transcending reality is attended to and sought after as the source of possible answers and solutions to the promises, inadequacies and perversions of human life.

27. On the other hand, the Christian faith itself needs to be aware of the danger that elements may enter into the religious forms of conceiving the divine reality, that can be called "false gods". Such false gods replace the true God in claiming the honour due only to him. They are created by and consist of absolutized selfish passion, the desire to possess, to dominate, to destroy, to deceive.

Thus both in individuals and in groups the notorious temptation of idolatry exists. It was for this reason that the Reformers spoke of the human heart as "forging idols". Whilst, first and foremost "idolatry" is a category belonging to the phenomenology of religion, nevertheless, even in politics, one experiences everywhere the effects of the idolatrous tendency to absolutize a phenomenon or a power of nature, history or human civilization and to elevate it into an ultimate, or into something that gives direction and meaning to life. Everything in the world of humanity, be it destructive or creative, can become an idol, a false god.

28. This is a danger also in modern secularism. There is contained in the biblical inheritance contains a "demythologizing" element. Indeed a certain sober "secularisation", which affirms a relative autonomy of the world, is part of the historical contribution of Christianity. Hence there should be no preconceived rejection of developments towards secularisation in culture and society such as have characterized the present age in Europe. However, such trends themselves all too often become subject to the old temptation towards idolatry, with the absolutizing of their ideological, political or technocratic aims. A secularisation which began as something quite legitimate can become an illegitimate "secularism".

29. It is on the basis of the Creed and in the living confession of faith in God that the challenge of this particular form of secularism has to be faced. The warning of the prophetic and apostolic message against this tendency towards idolatry is persistent and emphatic: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3f.). Thus the faith in the one God shows these gods for what they are, idols, illusions, destructive powers. It affirms and praises the one God, who alone - as Father, Son and Holy Spirit - is the giver of life in this world and the foundation of hope for the world to come.

Challenges posed by other religions

30. In the early centuries Christians believing in one God seemed to stand apart from other religions. However a closer look at the apologetic works of the early Christians shows that Christian theology shared some common ground with other religions, especially with Judaism and religious hellenistic philosophy. The early Christian attitude, echoing St. Peter's words in Acts 10:34f., is especially important today in view of the developing dialogue between Christianity and Judaism, or Christianity and other religions, especially Islam.

31. Christians are confronted with the fact that other monotheistic religions do not share their faith in a triune God. Indeed, Christians are often accused either of idolatry (Judaism) or polytheism (Islam). Jewish tradition knows of realities that represent the transcendent God within this world - his name, his glory, his shechinah, and his tora. Do these realities which are distinguished from God's transcendent being, really represent the presence of God himself? In that case the distinction between transcendence and immanence also applies to the Jewish conception of the one God. Indeed a transcendent God who could not be present in this world would hardly be the God of the Old Testament prophets. However, the Christian belief in the Incarnation expressed in the trinitarian Creed asserts the differentiated unity of God.

32. With regard to the Islamic charge of polytheism, it is important to stress that the Christian faith never intended to surrender the oneness of God. Nor did the trinitarian doctrine of the church intend to limit or to weaken the affirmation of the unity of God. Rather, the trinitarian differentiation of the unity of God is a condition of a truly consistent monotheism because it does not leave the principle of plurality outside that of unity so that unity would be a mere correlate to a plurality that was not included in the divine life.

33. In other religions, e.g. African traditional religions, Buddhism or Hinduism, the manifoldness of divinity is experienced in human beings and animals as well as in plants and things. These religions challenge the Christian trinitarian belief as being too abstract and cut off from the realities of day to day life. Syncretistic movements gain ground in Christian countries; they function often as compensation for the Christian trinitarian faith which is no longer understood in its fullness, richness and concreteness. In the face of these challenges Christians believe that the concreteness of the one God is no other than in the work of the Father, the

Son and the Holy Spirit: the Father is the Creator of every person, animal, plant, or thing that exists; the Son reveals the meaning and healing of the Father's creation; and the Spirit brings divine life into every detail of heaven and earth.

34. Although Christians confess God, revealed to them in Jesus Christ, in a way which, according to their conviction, is the only true way, they do not deny important elements of truth in other religions. This commits Christians to an attitude of respect and an openness for dialogue.

B. THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

35. The Creed goes on to identify the One God more specifically as "Father Almighty". Much else that might also be affirmed concerning the being and nature of God - his eternity, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness and so on - is implicitly included in this personal name, which lies at the heart of the first article as the fundamental characterization of the God in whom we believe. It gives the preceding description, "One God", substantive content, and leads on to the following words: "Maker of heaven and earth...", which draw out further one main dimension of its meaning.

36. In the first article of the Creed the idea of the Father and Creator is held together in a specific way. Although the three persons of the Trinity are involved in the creation of the world, of the Son it is said "through" him "all things were made", of the Holy Spirit, he is "the Lord, the giver of life", nevertheless the creator is confessed primarily of the Father.

37. These affirmations pose a number of challenges for many Christians in the contemporary setting. Is it possible to understand and confess the fatherhood of God in a non-patriarchal and non-authoritarian way? Is there a way to speak about God's fatherhood in a way which includes also "feminine" attributes? Does not the confession of God's almightiness reduce human beings to slaves of a distant, unreachable authority? And is there not a contradiction between the affirmation of God's almightiness and of God's love particularly in the face of evil, sin, injustice, suffering and death and the "powers" at work in this world?

I. THE CREED AND ITS BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

(a) The text of the Creed

38. "We believe in.... the Father, the Almighty".

(AC : "I believe in... the Father almighty")

39. The name, "Father almighty", may be analysed grammatically in two ways according to whether "Almighty" is treated as a substantive in apposition to "Father" ("the Father, the Almighty") or in a more adjectival sense ("the Father almighty"). The wording of the Ecumenical Creed can be taken in either sense, and both interpretations have been common in the history of the church. Each has its place. The first invites us to consider the distinct meanings of "Father" and "Almighty", the second to attend to the force of their conjunction, in particular to the mutual qualification of "Father" by "Almighty" and "Almighty" by "Father".

40. In the early church there were many claimants to universal sovereignty: the Hellenistic pantheon; deterministic Fate; the Platonic Forms; Aristotle's Unmoved Mover; the impersonal World-Reason of the Stoic philosophy; the esoteric teachings and rituals of the mystery religions; the Gnostic aeons; or even - not least - the apotheosis of earthly dominion in the Roman imperial cult. Against all of these the church and the Creed affirmed: the Father of Jesus Christ, and none other, is Pantokrator.

41. At the time of the framing of the Ecumenical Creed in the fourth century, the wording and content of the first article were not controversial, but the tradition which they represented had to be maintained and defended in earlier conflicts with Gnosticism, which drew a radical distinction between the Father of Jesus Christ and the Creator or cause of this material universe. The identification One God=Father=Almighty=Maker-of-heaven-and-earth was successfully upheld in the face of the determined opposition from those who could not and would not accept the One God the Creator of all that is. It is in this setting that the particular force of the inclusion of Pantokrator in the Creed is to be understood.

(b) Biblical foundation

42. The Father-Son image is used in the Old Testament to describe the relation between the LORD and the people of Israel. What is striking is the character of God's fatherhood that is stressed. The LORD is Israel's father because he created and established Israel (Deut. 32:6);

and the fatherhood is seen in his loving care and compassion for his people (Hos. 11:1f.; Jer. 3:19). What stands out is neither the maleness of God, nor a picture of a repressive authoritarian father. Rather, the qualities associated with God's fatherhood include those which have been designated as "feminine". This is further supported by the motherhood images used of God. The LORD is likened to a midwife (Ps. 22:9); the suckling mother (Isa. 49:15); the mother comforting her child (Isa. 66:13). Although these images of motherhood are used of the LORD, the LORD is never addressed as "Mother" as God is addressed as "Father".

43. The notion of the fatherhood of God is central to the New Testament. In John's language "Father" is a name and not only one among many images and designations. It is Jesus' distinctive way of addressing God in prayer. Again and again Jesus uses the term Abba to address his Father, which evokes a close, familial relationship. Jesus' relationship as Son to God the Father echoes throughout the Gospel stories. At the beginning of his life, the story of the Virgin birth in Matthew and Luke points to the way in which God is "uniquely his Father"; and at the end of his life in Gethsemane Jesus cries "(Abba) Father" (Mark 14:36 parallels) and, finally, on the cross he commends himself into his Father's hands (Lk. 23:46). The fatherhood of God is particularly grasped in relation to the centrality of the cross and resurrection. The Father is known most fully as Father loving the world, when he allows his Son to be crucified (Jn. 3:16). So close is the relationship between Jesus and his Father that he could say to Philip: "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9).

44. It is not only Jesus who calls God "Abba", but also his disciples whom he permits, and even commands, to address God as "Abba", "Our Father". Paul indicates that God is our Father because he is first the Father of Jesus, who graciously allows us to share by adoption in that unique Father-Son relationship. Furthermore, it is the Spirit who unites us with the Son and who sets us free as his brothers and sisters, to call God "Abba". What Paul says of "sons" he says also of daughters (2 Cor. 6:16-18): communion with the father is open to all human beings without differentiation (cf. Rom. 8:14-15; Gal. 4:6).

45. With regard to God being Pantokrator the Old Testament is full of testimonies to the LORD's power, to his might witnessed in his victory over his enemies and the forms of chaos and manifested in the ordering of creation (Ps. 93): this same power will be witnessed in the final triumph over his enemies and in the dawning of the new age (Isa. 9:6). The Old Testament never speaks of an abstract omnipotence, but of God's power manifested in action.

46. In the New Testament the use of the word Pantokrator is strikingly similar. It is a relatively rare word and occurs only a few times, all but one in the Apocalypse. Characteristic is Rev. 1:8: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Pantokrator". The affirmation has both a clear liturgical ring and an apocalyptic colour. It is a solemn, longing and jubilant cry of praise and hope in the midst of a dark and profoundly ambiguous world, a world indeed which appears to be in the hands of Antichrist.

The same note of confident trust is struck in the single New Testament passage outside the Apocalypse in which Pantokrator is used - 2 Cor. 6:16-18. This passage praises the faithfulness and the calling of God (with rich echoes of Old Testament prophecy) and ends: "and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Pantokrator" (v. 18). This points us to the authentic sense of the affirmation of the Father as Pantokrator in the New Testament itself: it is doxological and eschatological, testifying to the faithfulness and ultimate sovereignty of God as the ground of faith, confidence and trust - and also of our calling and obedience.

47. The affirmation has, however, a yet deeper ground in the Gospel, and one which more than all that has been mentioned so far discloses the nature and quality of God's sovereign power. It is a freedom and a sovereignty so transcendent that God could enter into his own creation in the Incarnation, and thereby victoriously assert his claim upon it in and through what appeared to be the absolute and final negation of his power, the crucifixion of the incarnate Son. The crucified Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:24-25). And in Christ's resurrection God reveals his power over sin and death to all human beings who put their trust in him. This is the sense in which God is supremely Pantokrator, the one who holds all things, in whose hands the world and its destiny are securely grasped in spite of the reality of evil, sin, suffering and death. This creating, recreating and saving almightiness will be revealed to all in its fulness at the end of time when all and everything is brought to perfection in Christ.

II. EXPLICATION FOR TODAY

The Father

The image of fatherhood

48. In the first article of the Creed the identity of the One God is confessed first as the Father. Indeed to call God Father is the basis of all that is said about the One God. The Father is the source of all divinity: the second article confesses further how this Father is the Father of the unique Son and finally the third article states that this Father is the one from whom the Holy Spirit proceeds. The fatherhood of God has to be understood in connection with the unique Son and the Holy Spirit.

Although the trinitarian doctrine used the biological metaphor of begetting in its description of the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son, it is the relation of origin that is focused upon. In the biblical language God's fatherhood transcends the sexual distinction between male and female which had been part of the polytheistic conceptions of gods and goddesses in Israel's cultural surroundings.

49. When God is called the Father in the Bible, in Jesus' own teaching and in the Christian church, it implies that there is a personal relationship between God and those who believe in him. God's fatherhood includes functions and attributes which belong to both men and women. In speaking of God as Father, the point of comparison is in the function of the parents in the family, who care for and nurture all their children, who are concerned for the weak, the oppressed and the most vulnerable of their children. Such parental functions include aspects of both fatherly and motherly care.

50. To confess God as the Father is to acknowledge a wholeness in God which we are called to reflect in ourselves, in our relationships with each other, in the life and structures of our society and not least in a renewed community of women and men in the church. God loves and shares all that he has, but he is also judging all attitudes and structures of oppression, domination and neglect in the church and in the world.

51. In Jesus' language about God "Father" is not only an image it is primarily the name of the God to whom he relates in his mission and whose kingdom he proclaims. It is the name used to address God in prayer. In its function as a name, the name of God in Jesus' own teaching

and prayer, the word "Father" cannot be replaced by another one. It would no longer be the God of Jesus to whom we relate, if we were to exclude the name Jesus himself used.

Commentary:

In some churches and cultural contexts there is disagreement as to whether God may also be addressed as "Our Mother". In this discussion the distinction between image and name is important.

Dimensions of God's fatherhood

52. The fatherhood of God relates in the first place to Jesus of Nazareth who is called the Son. The fatherhood of God is understood in the way Jesus spoke about God and related to God as his Father in obedient acceptance of his mission and suffering. Because God is in eternity the same as he is revealed in the history of the incarnate Son Jesus, his eternal fatherhood implies an eternal Sonship, the person of the eternal Son who became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth.

53. God is also the Father of the community of those - Jews and Christians - who recognize him as Lord. He is the Father of the people of Israel, and in a distinct, though related way he is also the Father of Christians. Through the Spirit we partake in the life of the crucified and risen Lord and are therefore entitled to address God as our father, Abba, as Jesus did (Rom. 8:14-17), and in, with and through him to intercede for each other and for the world. As children of God we share in the relation of the Son to the Father, because we were all made sons and daughters of God through our incorporation by baptism into the death and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ.

54. As in the case of Israel and of his Son Jesus Christ, so in the case of his children who belong to his son by faith and baptism, the Father calls his children to a life of love and obedience. In doing this he is not the coercive, authoritarian, domineering Father who holds his children to him by force. He allows his children space and freedom to become what he wills them to be, but he also disciplines his children in love and mercy as they grow, through the power of the Spirit, into the full stature of sons and daughters of their heavenly Father. As the Son's obedience was even to death, so Christians are called to follow that same way, knowing that as in his fatherly love God raised his Son from death, so in the same love the Father wills to give to all his children the gift of eternal life.

55. God is not only the Father of his eternal and incarnate Son and of his chosen people Israel and of the church, but also the Father of all beings (1 Cor. 8:6) as their creator and sustainer. He is concerned for every single creature, especially for those who go astray: he waits for their return to him. In order to save them from the destructive consequences of their sins and from the power of death, he sent his Son to save the world. Through his Son and through his Spirit, the providence of the Father extends to all creatures and aims at reuniting them in the community of his kingdom. This universal scope of God's fatherhood implies that Christians are called to share with and care for their brothers and sisters - whether they are regarded as friends or enemies - within the human family in their joys and sufferings. What is done in one part of the world has profound consequences for, and repercussions upon, other members of the human family.

The Almighty

56. The close association of Creator and Almighty with Father in the opening statement of the Creed tended to underline the idea that dominion and authority belong to the fatherhood of God. The Father God is the one who rules and yields authority over all creation, "the Almighty". The Greek term used here in the Creed is Pantokrator, literally, "the one who holds and governs all things". It does not mean, in an abstract way, "one who can do anything he wants", but rather "one in whose hands all things are". It is less a description of absolute omnipotence than of universal providence. To call the Father Pantokrator is to affirm that the whole universe is in his grasp, that he does not and will not let it go. At the same time, the affirmation that the Father is also Pantokrator brought with it (at least in principle) the de-throning of all other claimants to universal sovereignty, to government and mastery over the world and its history and destiny.

57. The Christian church praises and rejoices in the unlimited power of God to carry through his gracious and merciful purposes for humanity and for the world to bring about their consummation in the establishing of his kingdom in a new creation, in a new heaven and a new earth. Faith in God's omnipotence makes the Christian confident that "the powers of the present age" - whether political, economic, scientific, industrial, military, ideological or indeed religious - do not control and will not have the last word concerning the destiny of the world and humankind. The Lordship of the Almighty relativizes and judges them all: it confronts all other claims to sovereignty, it is a challenge to every form of enslaving

bondage, a celebration of the liberating strength of the creator of heaven and earth, and a sign and testimony of hope for each individual and for the whole created universe. The Church affirms and proclaims this faith against all appearances to the contrary.

58. The Christian confession of God's omnipotence does not mean that he is to be conceived like a coercive and all-powerful tyrant who would reduce everyone else to helpless and powerless objects of his caprices. Rather, his power is in the first place the power of his creative love and of his loving concern for his creatures, expressed in the patience of waiting for them to respond to his love and in his readiness to endure their revolt against his authority and to save them from the consequences of their neglect. God's omnipotence also includes the fact that his judgments are inescapable if the sinner does not return from his or her ways. Such judgment means that the sinner has to bear the consequences of sin (Rom. 1:18ff.) which finally lead to death. However, the love of the Father as expressed in the sending of the Son to reconcile and redeem the world aims precisely at preventing the destructive consequences of human sinfulness from destroying God's creation.

Omnipotence and theodicy

59. The Christian confession of God's omnipotence has to meet the doubts of those who cannot believe that the present world, full of injustice, hatred, envy, selfishness and suffering as it is, could be the product of a God who is at the same time benevolent and almighty. How, then, could God allow the powers of evil to prevail and to inflict unspeakable suffering upon the innocent? This question is one of the strongest motivations for atheism, an atheism of moral protest against the condition of the world as we experience it.

60. The Christian tradition argued that the admission of evil flowed from the granting of freedom to all creatures. freedom for the creatures. However, this cannot provide a full answer to the question of theodicy. The final answer to this question lies in the process of God's overcoming evil and suffering, in the reconciliation of the world through the Son of God. He made himself vulnerable in taking upon himself the suffering of the world, and in the victory over the powers of sin and death that will be complete only in the world to come, when all tears will be wiped away (Rev. 21:4). Only then the creation will finally be reconciled to the creator. This is the Christian hope. Meanwhile the sufferings and injustices of the present world ought not to entice people to atheism. God is the only ultimate power to be invoked

against powers of evil. This is also the source of courage and hope for those who believe in God to do all they can in struggling against these powers.

The Father Almighty

61. Implicit in all that is said above is that "Father" and "Almighty" mutually qualify each other. It is the Father, and no other, who is the Almighty; and as the Father he is indeed almighty, and nothing less. To speak only of the Father, forgetting that he is almighty, risks trivializing and sentimentalizing the divine Fatherhood; to speak only of the Almighty, as if he were not also Father, is to risk projecting a demonic vision of sheer arbitrary power as if that corresponded to the reality of God. Only when the two aspects are both seen together, and their interpretation controlled by the revelation of their meaning in Jesus Christ, are these dangers guarded against.

C. THE CREATOR AND HIS CREATION

62. Christians believe that the world in which they live is not an autonomous entity, which has its origins, life and destiny in itself. Rather, they believe that the world is the work of God, the Creator, who called it "ex nihilo" into being by his Word. God is not only the cause of its being but also the continuing source of its life and final goal of its existence.

63. This Christian affirmation is challenged because many today consider that the world is autonomous and self-sustaining, neither in need of a transcendent origin nor of a sustaining power. This world-view is connected with, though not a necessary consequence of, the rise of modern scientific technology. Another challenge comes to the Christian view of creation from the social reality of secularized society. Religion seems unnecessary and superfluous as an account of the establishment and sustaining of the social order.

64. A further challenge to the Christian view of creation comes from those who, while believing that creation originated with God, hold that it is now out of God's hands. Modern economic structures involve limitless exploitation of natural resources and endanger the ecological balance of life; nuclear weapons present a threat to the survival of humankind and perhaps the planetary systems, while genetic manipulation gives control over God's creatures. In such ways, modern scientific culture challenges the Christian belief that creation originated in God, that it is continually

sustained by him and governed according to the purposes of his design and the place of men and women in God's creation as responsible stewards of his creation.

65. Finally there is the challenge to consider theologically the relation between the affirmation of the goodness of creation and the reality of evil, principalities and powers within it.

I. THE CREED AND ITS BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

(a) The text of the Creed

66. "We believe in one God...,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen."

(AC: "I believe in God...,
creator of heaven and earth.")

67. The Church inherited from the Old Testament the faith that God is "the Maker of heaven and earth, the visible and invisible world" (Gen. 1:1ff.; Col. 1:15f.), and like ancient Israel it had to face questions about the goodness of God's creation and of the mystery of evil in the world. In the first centuries after Christ the interpretation of creation became again controversial when heretical teachings drove a sharp wedge between the visible and invisible world, between matter and spirit, the God of the Old Testament and of creation on the one hand and the God and Father of Jesus Christ on the other, between Israel and the Church, between the Old Testament writings and the New Testament scriptures.

68. At the time when the Creed was formulated in the fourth century, it was necessary to reaffirm the faith that God the Father is also the Creator, in order to exclude heresies which denied the identity of the creator and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (e.g. Marcionism and Gnosticism). The Christian tradition argued that everything comes from God against the view that the world was formed from pre-existent matter - a belief expressed in Gnostic and Manichean theories. The Fathers argue that not only the form of matter but the very existence of all comes from God. This excluded the idea of the co-eternity of the cosmos and even the assumption of uncreated matter.

(b) Biblical foundation

69. Although the LORD was understood as creator from an early period it was relatively late that Israel came to

proclaim the God of Israel sovereign over all other powers. It came in the time of the Exile after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, after the apparent humiliation and defeat of the LORD by the Babylonian god Marduk, in the days when Israel's trust in him might seem to have lost all basis. It was then that Second Isaiah announced that the LORD was indeed the creator of the whole world, ruling over it and its history. The Old Testament affirms that the whole world has come into being through God and is completely dependent upon him as its maker (Gen. 1:1-2:25; Ps. 8; Isa. 40:25-26); it shows forth God's wisdom and power (Ps. 104:24; Prov. 3:19-20); it bears witness to God's steadfast love and care (Ps. 136:4-9). Hence, the majesty of God, reflected in his works of creation, is the basis for worshipping and thanksgiving, for trusting and obeying God (Ps. 95; Isa. 40:27-31). Moreover it is the LORD's continuing power that upholds and renews the creation (Ps. 104:29-30).

70. Israel's belief in creation further found its expression in Genesis 1 and 2. These chapters owe much to the religious traditions of the Ancient Near East, especially to the Babylonians and the Canaanites. Although traces of belief in creation out of some existing matter can be detected behind the story, the Genesis account of creation has been drastically transformed and remoulded to express Israel's own belief that the LORD created by his mere word of command. The Genesis account of creation led to a belief in creation ex nihilo which finds clear expression in 2 Maccabees (7, 28).

71. Not only did the LORD create the world by his word but through that same word God directs the course of history. God's continuing care for the world, his acts of salvation in this history of his people are interpreted as acts of re-creation which will culminate in the eschatological act of salvation and re-creation at the end of time.

72. In the New Testament the soteriological and eschatological significance of creation comes to the fore in the context of the work of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit: God who created in the beginning, creates anew and will create in the future (Mk. 13, 19; Eph. 2 10; Rev. 1:8). In the end God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28) and there will be "a new heaven and a new earth" (2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1; cf. Isa. 65:17; 66:22). All creatures and nature itself will also be transformed and will participate in God's new world (Rom. 8:19-23).

73. In the New Testament the design of creation is seen in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 8:6; Jn. 1:1-18). God creates, sustains, redeems and perfects his creation through Christ who is the centre of all that is (Col. 1:15-17; Eph. 1:9-10; Heb. 1:2-3). This divine economy, however, is not to be seen as continuous progress towards perfection but, rather, has to deal with the destructive forces, which result from sinful self-centredness and self-concern, the cause of evil and suffering in God's creation. According to the New Testament the destructive forces finally lead to death in the individual and to the ultimate collapse of the created world. It is only God's sustaining and saving activity that counteracts and limits and will finally overcome the forces of evil at work in the world. The church, living under Christ as its head (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-24) and having its members continuously transformed into the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49), has a new vision of the ultimate purpose of the Creator and Redeemer, firmly believing in the future resurrection of the body and in the life of the world to come.

74. The belief in the creative power of God's word (Gen. 1; Jn. 1:1-3; Heb. 11:3) and the confidence that God is able to create "out of nothing" (Rom. 4:17; Heb. 11:3; cf. Matt. 3:9) are characteristic of the Christian faith in God the Creator. The same applies to the conviction that everything has a beginning, that creation is the starting point of history, that all human existence has a historical character and that creation serves a divine purpose.

II. EXPLICATION FOR TODAY

Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen

75. The first article affirms that the one God, the Father, the Almighty, is also "the maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible". In the second article it is further clarified that the Son of the Father is the one "through whom all things came into existence". Finally the third article affirms that the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, is "the giver of life", and concludes with an eschatological reference to "the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come". In this way it is affirmed that the One God, the Father Almighty, is the Creator through the Son and through the Holy Spirit.

76. Faith in God the Creator implies that the world is the good work of the Father and not an evil world hostile to him. As such the world is God's good gift to humanity

to live in it and care for it. In addition the Creed stresses that God is the Creator of both "heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible". This means that the created universe is not made up only of those material, tangible realities of the world which very often seem predominantly to occupy our attention.

The dividing line between what is seen and unseen appears to be shifting in the process of human experience and scientific descriptions of the world of creation. But there will always be a difference between what we can grasp and what is beyond our grasp. Invisible, spiritual subconscious and suprasensible dimensions which belong to the wholeness of God's creation are also, just as the material world, a locus for both good and evil. Notwithstanding the difference between the visible and the invisible aspect of creation there is no dualism or separation between "material" and "spiritual" in the Christian understanding of the world. The tension between the two belongs to our present condition of time but will be overcome in the realisation of the eschatological vision (cf. 1 Cor. 13, 12).

77. More than in some periods of church history the Christian affirmation of God as creator has assumed a deep existential and experiential meaning for many people. The contingency of individual existence as well as the existence of the world, the precariousness and fragility of all life remind the Christian of the complete dependence of finite reality on the power of God transcending every finite reality and order. This dependence affects every moment of human life and the continuing existence of the natural and social world and its order. It comprises both the origin of their existence and their preservation at any given time. The notion of "creatio ex nihilo" accordingly relates to both these aspects. Theological explications of the affirmation of God as creator are, therefore, of vital significance for the Christian faith, witness and life in the world today.

The Triune God and his creation

78. The trinitarian understanding of God is indispensable for a Christian understanding of God's relation to the world as creation. The One God is both transcendent to and present in his creation. Moreover each divine Person, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, of the one God participates in both this transcendence and this immanence. When Christians speak then of one or the other of God's works concerning creation as particularly appropriate to one or the other of the divine persons, they always insist that all three persons fully participate in that work. Thus

when they say that God the Father, the source of the triune being, is the God above creation who "in the beginning" created out of nothing all that is, they remember that this work is accomplished through the Word, God's Son, and through the Holy Spirit, the Creator Spiritus. Likewise, when they speak of the incarnation of the Second Person, of the divine Word become flesh (cf. Jn. 1:14), in so doing they also affirm that God the Father and creator is thereby expressing his faithfulness to and in his creation, and likewise that - as in the beginning, so in the incarnation - it is the Spirit who is active, leading to completion the work of the Father and the Son, and leading creation to its culmination in Christ, the first-born of all creation (Col. 1:15). Again, when they affirm the work of the Holy Spirit within creation, giving life, inspiring and empowering the creation towards the fulfilment of its destiny, they likewise praise God the Father whose mysterious purpose embraces all things (cf. Eph. 1:9) and God the Son in whom all things hold together visible and invisible. Thus, in all aspects of his relation to creation - in his transcendence, his presence within the world, his sustaining and perfecting activity - it is one and the same triune God in the loving communion of the three persons who is always at work.

God's glory in creation

79. Being made by the hands of the creator, the creation is firm in its foundation, very good and magnificent. It is not only made for use by humankind. God the creator, and humankind in communion with God, rejoice together in the creation (Gen. 1:31). Israel sees in the creation the characteristic features of God's glory on earth and in heaven (Ps. 8:2; Is. 6:1-3). It is this glory which accompanied the people of Israel during the course of its history, beginning with the Exodus. The Christian faith in the triune God affirms the presence of God's glory in the whole creation and rejoices in it with thanksgiving particularly in the celebration of the liturgy.

80. All of this means that creation is sanctified through the presence and activity of the triune God in it. Therefore in Christian trinitarian perception, creation is not to be seen in any sense as standing apart from God, as the deistic view asserts, nor as being confused with God, as the pantheistic view claims. Rather, creation, though other than God, and still "in bondage to decay and groaning in travail" (Rom. 8:21-22), can be properly understood only in relation to him as its creator, redeemer and sustainer.

Evil in creation

81. The Christian faith acknowledges the essential goodness of creation and that all created life is a sacred gift of God. Since evil, however, is a reality active within God's good creation, the Christian faith also recognizes that the goodness and wholeness of creation is constantly threatened by death and decay, natural catastrophies and manifold sufferings of created beings. Thus the whole history of creation is marked by a certain ambiguity which seems to be characteristic of this world as it is known in daily experience. Nevertheless, because of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, Christians expect the final healing, liberation and restoration of the whole of creation from the destructive powers of darkness and evil and look forward to the day when Christ is to consummate the whole creation in the eternal kingdom of God (cf. Rom. 8:22f.).

God sustains and governs his world

82. In his providence God cares for his creation. He responds to the need of each creature for sustained existence which arises every day anew. God has not created the cosmos once in the beginning and then left it to itself for its own perpetuation. Rather, through his continuous creation God preserves and sustains his creation at every moment.

83. This creation is not only preserved by God, but he is also its supreme Lord, governing everything in creation according to his will and leading it according to his plans towards the final consummation, not letting it go to the consequences of the destructive powers of evil. Thus the visible and invisible creation reflects and witnesses to the glory of the triune God who creates, sustains, governs and perfects it.

The responsibility of humanity in creation

84. In the Christian perspective humankind has been created in the image and likeness of its creator. As such humankind is given a permanent dignity which requires appreciation of life and praise of the creation and the creator. At the same time human beings are given responsibility to be God's representatives. They are to be co-operators in, stewards of, and even rulers over, creation (Gen. 1:26ff.; Ps. 8:4-8) - to care for all that is created, whether human beings, the animal kingdom, the plants and all the resources of the earth. This implies that human beings are free to develop science and technology and to use them for the purpose of caring and serving all that has been created. Yet their scientific

endeavours will always encounter limitations because God has not only created what "is seen" but also what is "unseen". There are realities in God's creation which are beyond the grasp of the human mind. Even though the range of human knowledge can be expanded, still at any new level of human knowledge the reality of what "is unseen" presents itself in new ways.

85. In recent times the charge has been made that the biblical command to be stewards of, and even rulers over creation has contributed to developments which threaten to destroy creation. This charge applies where the commission to rule over the world has been divorced in a process of emancipation from accountability to the creator. It also applies to Christian involvement in this process where the biblical command has been misunderstood in terms of human autonomy leading to abusive domination over creation and a neglect of the proper stewardship owed to the triune God. Understood in its true context and meaning, however, the biblical command liberates human beings to become co-operators with God in his desire and activity to preserve his creation.

The threat of destruction and God's act to save his creation

86. It is the reality of human sin which threatens creation, because sin leads to destruction, perishing and death. Humanity places itself in the position of God and as a consequence creation is abused and human life is destroyed. In disobeying God's commandment, humanity refuses to be God's steward and, instead, abuses God's good creation for selfish purposes in the exploitation of nature, the destruction of the environment and of human beings, and the use of science and technology for destroying life instead of furthering it.

87. But in Jesus Christ sin and death are overcome. In the resurrection of the crucified one, new life and hope, reaching beyond death, are given through the Holy Spirit, in word and sacraments and especially in baptism and eucharist. Through Jesus Christ, as the firstborn of a new creation, God has renewed and continues to renew humanity. Women and men are continuously set free to discover and acknowledge their creator, released from the bonds of enslavement within themselves in order to be truly human, to live in solidarity with all God's creatures.

Ethics of creation

88. This restoration of human beings in Christ established for Christians a new ethic of creation and

environment which demands of women and men the surrender of privileges and advantages which they had assumed in order to gain control over nature. The Christian understanding of, and relation to God's creation, calls for a more careful and responsible use of science and technology, resistance to the destruction of human beings and preference for human life and relationships over material things and a life of co-operation with God in preserving, renewing and sanctifying his good creation.

89. Creation itself is alive because of the dynamic power of the Spirit of God working in it. This life is threatened by war and ruthless exploitation. Christians, together with other people, are called to resist these threats with all their efforts. Even where the destructive powers of evil are at work in creation, Christians are assured in hope that the destiny of creation will remain in God's hands. God will bring the creation to its fulfilment in a new heaven and a new earth. Therefore, Christians can even now give honour, praise and glory to God the Father of all good things, who through his Son has come into his creation to redeem it, and who through his Holy Spirit gives new life to it until he will bring it to its final fulfilment.

PART II

WE BELIEVE IN ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST

A. JESUS CHRIST - INCARNATE FOR OUR SALVATION

90. The church confesses, worships and serves Jesus Christ as Lord. This confession rests upon a single central acknowledgment that in Jesus we encounter God as our Saviour. In acknowledging this, the Creed makes three affirmations.

First, the church confesses Christ as the image of the one true God, as God directly manifesting himself to us and entering into a new relationship with us.

Secondly, the church holds equally that Jesus Christ is truly human. Jesus is not only the eternal Son of the Father, he is also the "image" of true human being, entirely restored and transformed by God's gracious presence.

Thirdly, the church also affirms that this incarnation is "for us and for our salvation". God is affirmed to be present and living in the midst of human circumstances - even in poverty, pain and death - which are often thought to be beyond God.

91. These affirmations give rise to a number of challenges. (a) The belief that God comes in Christ has to meet the challenge that in human experience God often seems remote or simply not to be there. (b) The crucial significance of Jesus Christ as the "image of true human being" has to be affirmed in the face of worldly success being taken as the criterion for the fulfilment of human life which leads to a merely individualistic understanding of human personhood. (c) The confession of Jesus Christ as being our salvation is challenged by modern views of Jesus as a hero, a mystic, a teacher, a religious genius, a revolutionary, a moral example and by the very limited views of salvation which such concepts offer. (d) The salvation offered in Jesus Christ is further challenged by the forces of death active in personal life and in social and political fields. It is also challenged by other religious and secular offers of salvation.

I. THE CREED AND ITS BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

(a) The text of the Creed

92. "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
Light from Light
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us all and for our salvation,
he came down from heaven:
by the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man."

(AC: "I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the
Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.")

93. The Creed stresses that there is no time when God exists as a solitary individual, as a potential Father without a Son. The Son is eternal, springing from the Father as light streams from a flame without interval or interruption, truly and naturally living the same life as God the Father. The Son is not the issue of an arbitrary act of will. What the Father is and does, the Son is and does also. The Father is creator, but not alone; as Father of the Son, he creates with and through the Son. Because he eternally brings the Son out of his own life, he can decide to share the life he already (by nature) shares with the Son also with the creation. The Son gives shape and purpose to the inherent productive power of the Father, and so can be seen as the one "in" whom creation comes to be.

94. The most significant and controversial expression in this section of the Creed is the homousios - "of one being with the Father". The main point behind the inclusion of this word was negative - to exclude any idea that the Son was a different kind of reality from the Father, contingent and created. On the contrary, the Son, though dependent on the Father, is inseparable from the life of the Father: the Son lives, as the Father lives, in unconditional love, freedom, eternity, creativity. Thus God never exists as a solitary individual, but always in relation, as a movement of giving and responding, love poured out and love returned. As later church fathers

(e.g. Gregory of Nazianzus) were to put it, the word "God" means nothing other than the life which is actively shared by Father, Son and Spirit.

95. Although the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed makes no statement about the mode of the unity existing between Jesus and the eternal Son, the Council of Chalcedon in the fifth century explained and defined it by the concept of "hypostatic union": the divine and the human natures are not confused with one another or divided from one another, but the human nature is given its particular and unique mode of being because it is entirely sustained by the active presence of the eternal Word. Thus the divine Word does not replace any part of the human existence of Jesus, but underlies and acts through his complete humanity.

Commentary:

The detailed formulations about Christ as incarnate Son of God have to be understood in the context of the Christological debates of the early fourth century. The crisis of this period was not, strictly speaking, about "the incarnation": all parties agreed that Jesus was not exhaustively to be described or understood as a human being. What was at issue was the nature of what became incarnate.

In the debate leading to the Council of Nicea (325), Arius claimed that God the Father alone is without cause, hence he is the only true God, while everything else including the Son was caused by him to exist. Only the Father needs nothing other than himself, and has no natural relation to anything beyond himself. He may choose to become a "Father" by bringing into being a creature whom he chooses to treat as a son; but this relationship is no part of what it is to be God. It depends only on his will. The Son need not exist, and has no natural kinship with God in himself.

(b) Biblical foundation

96. Christians very early began to confess their faith in Jesus in terms of short formulations: Jesus is Lord, Jesus is the Messiah; Christ is "descended from David according to the flesh, and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4). Such short confessional formulae which were developed later into more comprehensive confessions are taken up in the New Testament writings that have been preserved for us.

97. Synoptic Gospels. Mark begins his gospel by proclaiming: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). As God's Son, Jesus proclaims God's reign or kingdom in deeds of healing and forgiving power and in challenging parables. Matthew begins with the birth story of Jesus, son of David and son of Abraham, who is conceived by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary as the saviour of his people and Son of God (Matt. 1:20-21; 2:15). Luke describes how an angel revealed to the Virgin Mary that she would bear a child who would be descended from David, but also through the power of the Spirit would be God's Son (Luke 1:32, 35).

98. All the synoptic gospels unfold their story of God's Son and his proclamation of the kingdom in a way that makes it fully clear that he was a human being. He is no stranger to human limitations (hunger, thirst, weariness) or human emotions (anger, compassion) - (Matt. 4:2; 14:14; 21:12-13; Mark 1:35-36; 10:21; 14:33-34; Luke 6:12). He is tempted (Matt. 4:3-11); his proclamation of the kingdom is rejected - at times because of his origins (at Nazareth, of an ordinary family) or because of his status as a worker or son of an artisan, or because he was not formally trained as a religious teacher (Mark 6:3; Matt. 13:55). Luke, in particular, stresses his belonging to Judaism: following the normal path of circumcision, presentation and assuming religious obligations at the age of 12 (Luke 1-2). Jesus celebrates Jewish festivals (Mark 14:12) and makes his own the classic summary of the Jewish faith (Mark 12:29-30; Deut. 6:4-5).

99. Yet in that very setting this Galilean Jew claims a unique relationship with the God of Israel to whom he turns in prayer, addressing him intimately as "Abba" (Mark 14:36). He is recognized as teaching with unique authority and doing miracles and other deeds that leave people amazed. His preaching and his healing, which proclaims the kingdom of God, have a special reception among the outcasts, those outside the law (tax collectors, prostitutes) and places a special value on the poor, the hungry and the powerless. No distinction between man and woman, or between social class is found among those who are called to be his disciples. He even extends his vision to those who are not members of Israel (Mark 7:24-30; Luke 13:29; Matt. 8:5-13).

100. The paradoxical mingling of the divine and the human is particularly seen in the synoptic gospels when the one whom the demons recognize as God's Son is rejected by some who are professionally religious, precisely because he associates with sinners or does not match their concept of religious obligation. Jesus then makes it clear that no one can partake in the kingdom of God without accepting him

who must suffer, be rejected and despised. Jesus becomes a person without a home or security (Matt. 8:20), challenging his followers to live likewise (Mark 6:8-11; 10:17-31). In Mark, in particular, Jesus is abandoned even by his followers. When his enemies appear to triumph over him, Jesus dies crying out in his loneliness to God, but he will be triumphantly vindicated by God who will raise him from the dead and who even under the cross causes a Roman soldier to recognize the Son of God in this wretchedly crucified outcast (Mark 15:39). Although in general the confession that Jesus is the Son of God took its origin from his resurrection (Rom. 1:3,4), according to Matthew it occasionally occurred before, during his earthly ministry (14:33, 16:16), but was accompanied with the warning by Jesus that he must suffer many things and be killed and then raised from the dead.

101. The Gospel of John. This gospel also begins with a confession of divinity. It tells the story of the Word who was God and who became flesh (1:1-14). The incarnation becomes the sign of God's love which enables his presence to be recognized in Jesus. His love is manifested in his solidarity with all he meets. He shares their joys and sorrows (Jn. 2:1-11; 11:35-38). Unlike the synoptics there is little stress in John on the outcasts or the poor, but in a more radical sense all human beings are "of the flesh" and belong to the world below and stand before God equally in need of rebirth through water and spirit (John 3:5-6). There is no special privilege of male over female (women like the Samaritan woman and Martha are just as important dialogue partners of Jesus as are men), no special privilege of those who worship in Jerusalem over those who worship on Mount Gerizim (4:21-24).

102. The Pauline Epistles. There are many formulae (some of them pre-Pauline and among the earliest evidence of christology) that stress the divinity of Christ as Son of God (Rom. 1:4), his pre-existence (Rom. 8:3; Gal 4:4) and human birth for the purpose of our salvation (Gal 4:5). The same idea is also implied in the self-humiliation (kenosis) theme of Phil. 2:7-8.

Later epistles bring together the "image" of the invisible God and the "first-born of all creation" (Col. 1:15), in whom "the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily" (Col. 2:9), and also "the man Christ Jesus, the one mediator between God and humans" (1 Tim. 2:5) who is also "our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13).

103. The Epistle to the Hebrews says that God "has spoken to us by a Son... through whom also he created the world, who reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of

his nature" (1:2-3). But Hebrews is most insistent that he was like us in every respect, tempted as we are, yet without sin (2:17; 4:15), thus he learned obedience through suffering (5:8) so that he cried out with tears and supplications to God who was able to save him (5:7).

1 John (5:20) ends with calling Jesus Christ "true God and eternal life", but begins by stressing that all of this involves his being able to be seen with eyes and touched with hands.

2 Peter (1:1) speaks of the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, but insists that "we were eye-witnesses of his majesty".

104. The earliest testimonies of the Christian faith in the New Testament provide the basis for later credal affirmations. The paradoxical statement that the life and glory of God the creator is made visible and manifest in a created human being, sharing our nature, is an insight expressed by the Nicene Creed which is deeply rooted in the New Testament story and the credal affirmations of the gospels and the epistles.

II. EXPLICATION FOR TODAY

One Lord Jesus Christ

105. The Christian confession recognizing Jesus Christ as one Lord is rooted in his resurrection from the dead by God's own power. The resurrection confirms the life and deeds of Jesus as the eternal word of God spoken for us and our salvation. The ambiguity surrounding his teaching and behaviour, and his claim to possess an authority beyond all human authority which led to his crucifixion, were given meaning by the Easter event. As a result of this divine confirmation in the resurrection the Creed ascribes universal and eternal divine authority to Jesus, who is to be heard, seen and obeyed as the Lord over all and everything. There are no human beings, no realms or levels which are not under the promise and the commandment of the one Lord Jesus Christ. There are many authorities and powers in the world, but Christians confess Jesus Christ as the one and only Lord in the same way as they believe in one God, the Father of the universe (cf. 1 Cor. 8:5f.).

True God from true God

106. The Creed affirms that the God of Jesus is the true and only God. This is to say that Christians judge all that is said today about God by the criterion of Jesus'

life, death and resurrection. They believe that Jesus is inseparable from whatever is to be said about the true nature of God. As God and his kingdom become a present reality in the historical ministry of Jesus and through his own person, so in all eternity God is not conceivable without the Son in whom the Father is revealed. The Son belongs to God as light comes from the source of light. He is of one being with the Father, because the Father, even in his eternal being, can only be conceived as Father of this Son. This is important because it affirms that God in his eternity is not alone, but a God in relationship.

Through Him all things were made

107. Since Jesus is the Son who belongs to the eternal being of the Father, the Creed affirms that this Son was involved in the very act of creation. Rather than being a creature himself, he is begotten not made, and all of creation was designed from the beginning to be brought to completion in the Son (Eph. 1:10). In creating the world, the creative love of the Father aimed at the image of the eternal Son through whom all things came into existence. The Son is the eternal model, the "Logos" of all creation, epitomizing what each creature in its particular way is to be. No creature can fulfil its being without communion with him.

For us all and for our salvation he became incarnate

108. That the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth is an affirmation summarising the entire course of Jesus' earthly ministry as seen from the perspective of his resurrection. The incarnation, thus, is not only related to the beginning of Jesus' human life. It is related to his ministry and mission for the salvation of the people of Israel, of all humanity and creation. Amongst the various understandings of ways of salvation are the following:

- (a) In the mission of the Son the eternal love of the Father for all of his creatures becomes manifest in his self-giving to the point of death.
- (b) The power of death which is the consequence of our turning away from God is overcome. Communion with the Father is restored through the Son in the power of the Spirit.
- (c) The Father in his unconditional and infinite mercy accepts the sinner who turns to him thus restoring the communion with him that was lost through sin. This happens when we share in the sonship of Jesus himself and in his relation to his

Father, when in his spirit we are liberated to address the Father as "Abba" in our prayers, and encouraged to entrust ourselves to his loving concern.

(d) The consequence of salvation is that we are called to be faithful and obedient daughters and sons of God authoritatively proclaiming God's acceptance, living already in the kingdom as far as we are able, living out the values of the kingdom, welcoming the outcast, oppressed and helpless, identifying with the suffering and confronting the risk implicit in the attempt to live in this way in a world which still resists the love of God and its demands.

By the Holy Spirit and from the Virgin Mary

109. The Creed says that the incarnation of the Son of God took place by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the same Spirit who according to the Scriptures raised Jesus from the dead and is given to the faithful as a pledge of their future share in the new and everlasting life of the resurrection. It is the same Spirit who will bring about the transfiguration of all creation to share in the glory of God. When the Creed attributes the incarnation to the power of the Spirit, it relates this event to the consummation of the world.

110. In referring to the motherhood of Mary the Creed points to the true humanity of Christ. The motherhood of Mary shows the Son of God to be a human being like us, one who shares our experience of being born, growing as a child loved and educated by a mother. Mary is the disciple who hears the word of God, responds to it and keeps it. In her obedience to God and her utter dependence on the Holy Spirit, Mary is the example par excellence of our discipleship. In her waiting upon the Spirit Mary represents the daughter of Sion, Israel, waiting for the accomplishment of the messianic promises and of the coming kingdom.

111. In her complete reliance on God, her active response of faith, and her expectation of the kingdom, Mary has been seen as a figure (typos) of and an example for the church. Like Mary, the church in its poverty can only count on God; it is the vigilant servant waiting for the return of its Master.

Commentary:

In affirming the virginity of Mary, the Creed underlines the fact that her son Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, "eternally begotten of the Father".

Some Christians today feel difficulties with the affirmation of Mary's virginity, not always because they reject in principle the possibility of God's miraculous action, but because they think that the form of the New Testament witness (Luke 1:26-38; Matt. 1:18-25) does not intend a historical claim to Mary's virginity. It rather witnesses to the divine origin of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Thus the point of the biblical story is christological.

All Christians share in the confession that Mary became the mother of him who is God, Theotokos, through the creative work of the Spirit of God.

And was made man

112. In the way that he is human, in his words and deeds, his anger and his love, Jesus is, and shows us for our salvation what the true human image is like. Jesus shows us what we should be and what we could become by the power of God's presence in our midst. According to Christian faith, human existence is defined by those positive potentialities hidden in us which are restored and brought to light in Jesus who thus reveals the image of God. This belief enables us not to despair of ourselves or of history nor to consider it meaningless. Christ is even now woven into the fabric of the human story, transfiguring the past, present and future. Like him, we are to acknowledge our historical dependence, our need for others, and the claim of others' needs upon us. We cannot exist as abstract autonomous individuals without a past or a context; our freedom is a freedom not to run from our limitations but to respond to them with creative and transforming action.

113. The reality of the incarnation points to certain specificities of Jesus' human life which does not represent an exhaustive range of human possibilities (e.g. he was a Mediterranean Jew, not an African or a European). This model of Jesus' specificity and limitations encourages us to accept our own specificities and limitations, who we are and where we are, not passively but in an imaginative, critical, exploring way. Jesus' limited life is capable of showing unconditional truth and love about God and his world; any limited life, however frustrated or apparently diminished, the life of a slave or the life of a paraplegic, can be transfigured to show forth the truth and love of God. In God's eyes, every human life has the chance of reflecting the life of Christ.

B. JESUS CHRIST - SUFFERING AND CRUCIFIED FOR OUR SAKE

114. From the time of the earliest New Testament witness and throughout the centuries the church has confessed that Jesus Christ suffered and was crucified for us. The theological significance and focus of this confession is indicated by for our sake. These words point to the decisive saving event for all human beings. Such confession is made on the basis and in the perspective of the full christological confession that Jesus Christ is both true God and true human being and that he has been raised from the dead.

115. The confession that Jesus Christ suffered and was crucified for our sake is made today in a world which is marked by the struggle between the forces of life and the forces of sin, suffering and death. Therefore, the challenge to the faith we express in this affirmation of the Creed is: what is the relevance of the confession of Christ crucified for us in the face of sin, suffering and death in this world and its relevance for the struggles of Christians and others in facing these realities? The most profound challenge is expressed by the question: how can the guilt of all be removed by the suffering of one? In addition the involvement of the Jewish people in the suffering and death of Jesus raises questions which need an appropriate answer.

I. THE CREED AND ITS BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

(a) The text of the Creed

116. "For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried."

(AC: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.")

117. In the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed the crucifixion, suffering and burial of Jesus Christ are the only data concerning his human life besides the fact of his birth. The death of Christ in the Creed is given a comparatively brief reference when compared with the preceding section which deals with the divine nature and the incarnation of Christ. This imbalance is readily understood when the context of the Arian controversy is taken into account; but it has a positive import as well, for it makes absolutely clear that the one who was crucified, suffered and was buried was none other than the eternal Son of God who became a human being.

118. The phrase "under Pontius Pilate" indicates that the death and suffering of Jesus Christ is a specific historical event in world history.

The phrase "for our sake" also appears in the preceding formulation concerning the incarnation and expresses thereby the link between the incarnation and the death of Jesus and their saving character for humanity.

(b) Biblical foundation

119. During his passion, when Jesus was taken captive all of his disciples left him and fled (Mark 14:50). They scattered, as he had said they would (Mark 14:27). They could not understand his cruel suffering and death. Rather they saw in it the defeat of Jesus and his rejection by God (Luke 24:20f). Only after Easter, after Jesus had appeared to them as the one raised from the dead, did they begin to understand that his death was not a meaningless defeat, but was something that had to occur (Luke 24:26) for their salvation and for the salvation of the entire world.

120. In the synoptic gospels, but above all in Mark, the suffering and death of Jesus is described against the background of Psalm 22. As the writer of this Psalm (and with him everyone who makes these words their own) experiences the deepest forsakenness, namely the sense of having been forsaken by God, in the same way Jesus also participates in this God-forsakenness. He was despised and rejected by his fellow human beings (cf. Ps. 22:7-9; Mark 15:19f.), deprived of his human dignity (Ps. 22:18; Mark 15:24): he experienced the despair of a man who felt himself deserted by God and died (Ps. 22:2f; Mark 15:34). Thus Jesus stands in solidarity with all who are outcasts and subject to derision, with all who are at a distance from God, and in this way he makes their suffering his own.

121. All of this he underwent in conformity with the will of God. As the "suffering Servant of God" Jesus lays down his life for the many (Mark 14:24). As the veiled "Son of Man", who will come to judge the world (Mark 14:62), Jesus himself was subject to judgment (cf. the dark hours of judgment that spread over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour (Mark 15:33 and Amos 7:14). In this way Jesus as the obedient Son of the Father fulfilled his mission (Mark 10:45), that he came "not to be served (cf. Dan. 7:14) but to serve, and to give himself as a ransom for the many" (cf. Isa. 53:11f.).

122. In the Gospel of John Christ's suffering and death are given a wider meaning in the sense that they expose a deeper struggle between the God of love, light and life, and the world of evil, darkness and death, as well as between belief and unbelief (12:31, 14:30, 16:11). The cross represents the glorification of God through the obedience of Christ which "overcomes the world" (16:33).

123. In the early preaching of the Apostles as seen in the book of the Acts, the suffering and death of Christ are interpreted with reference to the Old Testament prophetic imagery of the righteous Servant (3:14), and the resurrection is seen as the vindication of God's Servant (3:15). The crucifixion is the prelude to the fulfilment of God's purposes in the resurrection (2:29-33).

124. The meaning of the suffering and death of Christ "for us" acquires specific interpretation in the Pauline Epistles. Paul says that "God gave his Son for us all" (Rom. 8:32) and quotes an older credal affirmation, "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor 15:3). The meaning of this "for us" or "for our sins" is threefold: (1) our sins are the basic cause of Jesus' suffering and dying; (2) Jesus Christ accepted representatively and vicariously for us the death which we ourselves really deserve on account of our sins; (3) Jesus Christ died to bring about our liberation from death and sin and our justification by and before God. These are three aspects of one and the same event, and are indissolubly bound up with one another. They interpret the death of Jesus in terms of the notion of expiation and representation. Because it is God who gives his Son, this expiatory event is God's action for us, an event in which God reconciles us to himself (2 Cor. 5:18). The notion of Christ's death as sacrifice which appears in Pauline teaching (Rom. 3:25) and in 1 Peter (1:18f.) is particularly developed in the epistle to the Hebrews (7:23ff.) where Christ stands for us in obedience to God as our great high-priest.

125. The death of Jesus is paradoxical. The one who was without sin bears our sins so that sinners may receive forgiveness; the accursedness and death of the one in whom God came into our midst becomes a blessing for all (cf. Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13). Thus our life also is taken up in the death of Jesus. Over us also stands the judgment of God that has been revealed in the cross of Jesus - not that we should be lost, but that in dying with Christ we might also be made alive in his life (cf. Rom. 6:3ff.; Gal. 2:19f; 2 Cor. 5:14ff.).

126. The suffering and death of Christ as a saving event for us is appropriated by us in two ways which are closely interrelated. On the one hand it is understood as God's own action of reconciliation, whose fruit we receive especially in the forgiveness of sins. On the other hand, it is seen as an event in which Christians participate by following him in their lives and bearing their own crosses (Mark 8:34, 10:45; Heb. 12:2ff.). Both sides of Christ's representative suffering and death, its more "exclusive" as well as its more "inclusive" meaning, are appropriated by us through hearing the proclamation of the Word with faith, by receiving baptism and by partaking of the Eucharist (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 6:3f.; 1 Cor. 11:23-24; Mark 14:22ff. and parallels).

II. EXPLICATION FOR TODAY

He was crucified for us

127. Human beings live in bondage to sin and death. Sin opposes and alienates human beings from God and from one another. They seek to justify themselves by their own efforts and achievements. The result of this self-centredness, egoism and striving for power over others manifests itself in the attitudes of groups of people and in many contemporary social, political and economic structures: unjust and oppressive forms and conditions of life, hunger, imposed poverty, exploitation, discrimination, anxiety in the face of an escalating arms race, and in many other ways. These consequences of sin cause hatred, suffering, despair and death among human beings, and lead humankind to disrupt the natural order and to threaten the very existence of our world.

The situation created by sin and its consequence, death, is also a manifestation of God's judgment, in that, as the Apostle says, "he gives humanity up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts" (Rom. 1:24, cf. 26 and 28).

128. In which way is the gospel of the suffering and death of Christ the Good News for all people? We see in Christ's suffering and death God's action by which he destroyed the power of death, he took away the guilt from humanity and he created the prototype of new life for those who follow Jesus.

Commentary:

The death of Christ has been understood (in the history of the Christian faith) in different ways. One type of interpretation is frequently found in the theology of the ancient church and is continued

in the tradition of the Eastern church in particular. Here, the death of Jesus Christ - God and human being - is seen as destroying death's power and influence, by which human beings are burdened and oppressed. The death and resurrection of Jesus is a victory by which human beings are liberated from death and all the powers of darkness.

Another type of interpretation is represented in the medieval and post-medieval West. Here the death of Jesus is understood as an atoning event in terms of an offering of satisfaction, whereby the guilt incurred by human beings in violating God's honour by their sin is removed.

There is a third type of interpretation found especially in modern theology. Here the dying of Jesus is seen in the perspective of his total faith and obedience. He remained faithful to his mission right to the very end. Thereby he became for us the prototype of a life which refuses to be diverted from its devotion to God and to other human beings and which witnesses to God as the loving and merciful one through the quality, depth and cost of its trust.

On the basis of the biblical witness as outlined above, the real concerns implicit in these interpretations are not alternatives. They emphasize particular aspects of that witness and should be held together as complementary.

129. In his suffering and dying for us, Jesus, despite all the hostility and pain inflicted upon him by the people and the authorities, did not abandon his mission of love, but persisted in it - that very same love in whose strength he displayed to his fellow human beings the unconditional love of the Father. Jesus' death is not a "condition" in the sense that the Father's love requires such an expiatory offering; rather Jesus' life was lived under the human "condition" which made his death on the cross inescapable: it was inevitable that in bringing the Father's boundless love into this world Jesus had to suffer such demonstrations of hostility which led to his death. Coming into the situation of God's judgment, Christ experienced in his suffering and death the consequences of human sin. He was sent by God "in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin" (Rom. 8:3), as one who was himself without sin, as Lamb of God (Isa. 53:4-7; John 1:29), and he carried away the sins of the world like a scapegoat (Lev. 16:22; Heb. 9:12).

130. In this sense, Jesus' sacrifice of suffering and death has become the salvation of the world because this was the way in which God was reconciling the world to himself. The message of the reconciliation accomplished in the death of Jesus is for all people the offer of liberation, through justification and the forgiveness of sins received in faith, as well as in the gift of new life in the Holy Spirit. God relieves consciences burdened by sin and guilt. Christians experience this acceptance in spite of their guilt and without the pressure of having to merit such acceptance by their own deeds. This is a comforting and liberating experience.

131. It is through faith and baptism that a human being dies with Christ and is raised to a new life in the service of justice (cf. Rom. 6:3f.; Col. 3:3f.). Such a transformation liberates people from the vicious circle of self-justification and egoism, hatred and injury to neighbours, lack of gratitude towards God and disregard of God. It enables people to overcome their fear and to live with confidence and readiness to forgive, thus challenging the deadly powers of hatred, alienation and mistrust by understanding, love and reconciliation. This is a process which also becomes effective in the social and political fields as an impulse and strength for liberation.

132. The discipleship of a person so liberated by God's love is not free however from sin, suffering and death. But we are assured that even death cannot separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:38f.). The way of powerlessness and humility is the way of divine wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18ff.); it is the way in which God's liberating and victorious action becomes effective in history.

Under Pontius Pilate

133. Particularly significant in this credal formulation is the phrase under Pontius Pilate which not only indicates that the death and suffering of the incarnate Son of God is a specific historical event, but puts it in the wider context of world history and human political power. As the Creed's formulation "under" indicates, the execution of Jesus took place under the authority of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. Pilate represents in general terms political oppression over an occupied country. He also represents, in the way he preserves his own power during the trial of Jesus, the violation of an individual's human rights for opportunistic reasons (cf. Mark 15:6-15). The statement that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate indicates that his death was not a private but a public affair and that the end of his life was deeply interwoven with the political circumstances in Jerusalem at that time. This was a consequence of his and

the disciples' witness to the kingdom. These implications were misused and misrepresented by his enemies. Thus there is in different ways socio-political dimensions to Christ's life and death, which are of great importance for the living and dying of Christians in today's world.

134. At certain times during the course of the centuries an attitude arose among Christians which accused the past and present Jewish people of being guilty of the death of Jesus. Such attitudes continue today. Although there are passages within the passion story of the New Testament which refer to the Jewish people claiming the consequences of Jesus' death for themselves and their future generations, such as: "his blood be on us and on our children" (Matt. 27:25), a distinction must be made between the quoted Jewish voice from that time and God's own judgment over his chosen people. In any case such New Testament passages cannot be used to justify the long history of anti-Jewish attitudes among Christians.

135. As a Jew, Jesus was born, lived and died within the context of the Jewish people and tradition. Thus the Messiah came from God's chosen people. For this reason the Jews are to be blessed by every gentile. It was primarily certain small, but influential circles of religious leaders, groups of Pharisees and Sadducees, who were involved in the events leading to Jesus' death. They opposed him because he had fundamentally attacked the official understanding of the authority of the law. These religious leaders, as well as Pontius Pilate, exemplify a temptation that exists for all authorities when confronted with the message of the kingdom of God.

136. The Father both of Jews and Gentiles is to be praised because through Christ's death he has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles. He has made the two brothers and sisters in his one undivided people, grafting the wild gentile olive shoot to the branches of the original olive tree (cf. Rom. 11:17).

He suffered

137. The gospel of the suffering and death of Christ is the Good News for all people, not only those who actually suffer but also those who seem to be free from suffering. In our world today many people are suffering. Indeed, the entire creation is groaning in travail awaiting the salvation of humankind (cf. Rom. 8:19, 21).

Individuals and groups of people alike suffer despair, from loneliness, illness and pain, physical and mental handicaps or natural calamities. Suffering may be self-

inflicted, inflicted by others, or the result of tragic accidents. But there is also suffering which is freely accepted whenever people risk their lives in order to help and save others and to alleviate human suffering.

138. Despite all the identifiable causes and rational explanations of suffering and death a deeper question remains. Why is there suffering and death at all? Why does this kind of suffering happen to me and not to others? Why are my people trapped in the abyss of starvation while others are enjoying affluence and apparent security?

139. Behind these questions lies a protest against suffering and death as such. This protest finds explicit and constructive expression in the struggle of the forces of life against the forces of sin, suffering and death. There is compassion with and sensitivity to the suffering. Many efforts are undertaken to improve the conditions of human life through medical care, social services and through changing those structures which inflict massive suffering and death. Religions, philosophies and ideologies seek in their way to sustain the struggle against suffering and death. The question to the Creed is: What light is shed by the confession of the crucified Christ for us upon this sin, suffering and death on the one hand, and upon the efforts to overcome all these evils on the other?

140. The salvation offered through the suffering and death of Christ does not explain the why of human sin, suffering and death, but shows how it is overcome. In the suffering and cross of Jesus, God has taken upon himself in the person of his Son the condition of human death that is provoked by our sin and demonstrated his solidarity with human beings and his compassion for their suffering. God is on the side of human beings in the struggle with the powers of sin and death.

141. This has a twofold meaning for people who live under sin, suffering and death. God is demonstrating to them that he is with them in these situations, that he is suffering where they are suffering, and thereby gives them consolation and strength. God is also providing them with hope for a life which is no longer marked by death. Moreover, God's solidarity enables them to struggle against sin, suffering and death in all their manifestations, because it assures them that God is never on the side of the oppressor, the bringer of death, but is always allied with the victim.

142. Because Christians are incorporated into Christ by baptism, they are led in many ways to suffer with him as they share in his obedience. The call to discipleship implies a readiness to take up one's own cross. Saying "yes" to God today runs the risk of entering into the destiny of Jesus Christ, of the "yes" to God for which he was crucified.

143. Christ uses this suffering for and with others to do his work of love and salvation through us. Such suffering with Christ for others has marked the life of many Christians, beginning with the first followers of Jesus and continuing through the centuries until today. This company of suffering witnesses includes the many well-known martyrs as well as millions of unknown Christians. Through their participation in Christ's suffering they receive the gift of new life which overcomes all suffering, and they witness to this gift before their fellow human beings.

144. The suffering and the apparent scandal of the crucifixion of Jesus exposes the unjust powers of this world. The one who was innocent and just was crucified as a criminal; and this fact continues to uncover injustice that masquerades as justice. The crucifixion of Jesus exposes the cruelty of human beings and of dominant religious and political powers. Although they appeared to triumph over God's righteous and loving Servant, their victory was shown to be a defeat by God's own victory in the resurrection. The apparent weakness of God proved to be stronger than the powers of this world. The justice of God condemns the injustice of all power that excludes and murders.

145. All Christians and churches are called to continue in the power of Christ's suffering, crucifixion and resurrection to identify and confront inhuman and oppressive powers in this world. Looking back at those who pretended to serve God's will by crucifying his Son, Christians are enabled to identify the idols of status and security which seduce people from the worship and service of the true and only God. Such discernment must also include an awareness of the danger of a false triumphalism in the church and among Christians, an attitude which obscures the true nature of God's victory in the cross and resurrection of his Son. Christians are called and empowered to be effective witnesses to Jesus Christ through their obedient suffering with him and in their resistance to and denunciation of all powers that seek to take the place of God.

C. JESUS CHRIST - RISEN TO OVERCOME ALL EVIL POWERS

146. The Christ in whom Christians believe is the present living Christ who meets them in the living word, in baptism and eucharist, in the accepting and offering of forgiveness, in loving and in blessing one another. They would not be able to pray, were it not in the name of Christ. They would have no hope in this world of death and hatred were it not for their belief that the suffering Christ is the Risen One.

147. Such affirmations are confronted with serious challenges today. How can the power of the Risen Christ become a source of strength, perseverance and hope over against the social, economic, ideological and other powers which seek to dominate our destiny? And how is belief in resurrection and life beyond death possible at all in an age marked by scientific-technological thinking, on the one hand, and by death on the other?

I. THE CREED AND ITS BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

(a) The Text of the Creed

148. "On the third day he rose from the dead
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end."

(AC: "On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again
to judge the living and the dead.")

149. The Creed fully represents the intimate connection between the incarnation, the resurrection, the ascension and the present and future role of Jesus Christ (seated at the Father's right hand, and coming again in glory) as it is expressed in many parts of the New Testament. The distinction between the resurrection and the ascension is not significant in Pauline theology, and not stressed particularly in the Gospel of John. Luke/Acts however emphasizes a chronological sequence in which the Ascension followed Easter after 40 days. This latter chronology became the dominant view in the early church and is expressed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

150. The Creed's statements in this section consist almost entirely of direct and indirect quotations from New Testament texts. The purpose of this selection of central biblical affirmations must be seen in light of the original use of creeds in baptism, i.e. in the context of worship, and of identification with Christ in baptism in his suffering and his glory. The Creed reflects a vision of the "history of salvation", similar to that in earlier and shorter creeds in the Eastern and Western Church, e.g., the Apostles' Creed. This is of particular importance with regard to the statements concerning the second advent of Christ and the final consummation.

(b) Biblical foundation

151. That Jesus rose from the dead is fundamental to the Christian confession and community. In the gospels this message unfolds in the Easter stories. There we see that the Easter event itself is not directly described, but rather its effects: the grave is empty; the stone is rolled away. The women who come to the tomb on Easter morning to anoint the body of Jesus cannot find the living among the dead (Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:5). The appearance of the Risen Jesus is fundamental to Christian faith in the resurrection. There is an element of continuity and an element of transformation in these appearances. In the stories of his appearance Jesus encounters his disciples as the living, risen Lord who overcomes their anxiety (John 20:19-23), their unbelief (John 20:24-29), their guilt (John 21), their pride (Phil. 3:6ff.), and at the same time makes them his messengers (Matt. 26:16-20; John 20:21f.; John 21:15ff.; Gal. 1:15f.). The bodily form in which Jesus was recognized by his disciples is veiled in mystery. Jesus, the Risen Lord, comes through closed doors behind which the disciples have sheltered themselves and appears in their midst (John 20:19). He encounters Mary as a stranger whom she at first takes for the gardener and can only recognize when he calls her by her name (John 20:14ff.). He accompanies the two disciples on their way to Emmaus as an unknown traveller and disappears before their earthly eyes precisely at the moment when they recognize him as the Lord (Luke 24:31). On the other hand Luke 24:41 relates that Jesus ate in order to demonstrate his corporeality. The representations keep the question open. Even so, it is important in all the stories that the Resurrected One was recognized as the earthly person they had known. The Risen Lord bears the marks of his crucifixion (Luke 24:39; John 20:20, 22).

152. "For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your hearts that God raised him from the dead you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9). In this

confession it is expressed - and above all, the epistles point this out - that Jesus did not remain in death and forsakenness. God acknowledged him before the entire world, before people and angels, as "justified" (cf. the short early hymn in 1 Tim. 3:16). The one who in his obedience in lowliness was the hidden Son of God has been made the Son of God in power "through the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). God elevated him above all powers and authorities and has put all things under his feet (Eph. 1:21-22; Phil. 2:9f.; Col. 2:15; Heb. 1:3ff.). From now on the world stands under the lordship of Christ - what the world does not yet know the community of Jesus already confesses and bears witness to (cf. 1 Cor. 8:5f.).

153. In his resurrection Jesus became the first-born from the dead, the first-born of all who sleep, the new Adam of a new world (Col. 1:18; Acts 1:5). "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ are all made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22). Paul mentions a traditional list of appearances in 1 Cor. 15:5-8 and then goes on to compare the resurrection of the dead to sowing the perishable and raising the imperishable - a body is involved, but what is sown is physical and what is raised is spiritual. This new future, namely, to be with the one who was raised and live with him (Phil. 1:21ff.; 2 Cor. 5:1ff.) determines even now the life of the believers. The presence of the Risen Jesus Christ among the worshipping community (Matt. 28:17), and indeed in the individual lives of believers (Gal. 2:20), is central to the explications and exhortations of the New Testament. The believers are to live as people who are free from the slavery of sin and of death and who put themselves at God's disposal and the service of righteousness (Rom. 6:15ff.). They are to walk now in a new life that is determined by hope, faith and love (1 Peter 1:3ff.; Rom. 5:1-5; Eph. 4:23ff.).

154. That Jesus has been elevated as Lord above all powers and authorities will be made clear when he appears at the last day. Then all people must come before his judgment seat (2 Cor. 5:10) and give account for themselves. But this account will be according to the measure of Jesus Christ (cf. Matt. 25:31-46; Mark 8:38; Luke 18:9-14). The faithful may know that the judge is not an unknown God. In the last judgment the one they meet is the one who gave himself for them (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 8:31ff.).

II. EXPLICATION FOR TODAY

He rose again and ascended into heaven

155. To be a Christian is to confess that Jesus did not remain in the power of death but was raised from the dead and transformed into a new and everlasting life. Therefore Christians acknowledge that the resurrection is the decisive event without which "our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor. 15:13-14). Even though believers today are not in full agreement as to the mode of Jesus' resurrection, the church confesses the resurrection of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is intimately connected with it, as the foundation of its life and identity, as the ground of hope for the whole world, and as God's pledge of eternal life.

156. The new life of the Risen One is a present reality. It makes its presence felt in various ways, though in a veiled form in this present age. It is the ground of joy as well as hope. The resurrection of Jesus Christ gives rise to joy which expresses itself in hymns, in liturgical and extempore prayers - collective as well as individual - in the celebration of baptism and the eucharist, in Christian fellowship, in the search for a wider and deeper Christian unity, in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ even in difficult circumstances, in service to the poor, the needy and the sick, and in Christian giving. It is the joyous message of the resurrection that enables Christians to cross all human frontiers and break the barriers that divide us - class, caste, race, sex, religion and ideology.

157. The resurrection of Jesus Christ also evokes hope in us - hope for life on earth as well as life beyond death. For it points to a wider horizon, to God's offer of a new future, both for the individual and the whole of humanity. In the light of the resurrection, therefore, there are no ultimate dead ends or hopeless situations, because the God of the resurrection is present in Christ to offer a new possibility, calling forth life out of death. This hope drives away the fear of death and all evil powers. It refuses to be satisfied with maintaining the status quo of the old humanity, and confronts all oppressive powers that thwart new life. The life that is based on the resurrection of Jesus concerns itself with the wholeness of human personality. It seeks the well-being of the neighbour and the renewal of the whole human community since it knows that Jesus rose again to be the head and Lord of the new humanity.

158. According to the dominant line in the New Testament witness, resurrection and ascension may be considered as different aspects of the one reality of the risen and exalted Lord.

He sits at the right hand of the Father

159. At the resurrection and ascension, Christ is exalted by the Father. He is made one with God in honour and dignity and receives the title of Lord, that is the title that the people of God gave to God himself. Because of his obedience, he is now forever associated with the sovereignty of God the Father. And thus, at Pentecost, he is the one who pours out the Holy Spirit, and offers to humanity the gift of salvation. Nothing comes from God without him. The Epistle to the Colossians even says that it is through him and for him that God created everything in heaven and on earth, the visible and invisible things, including spiritual powers and authorities (1:15-20). And he will judge the world.

160. When we affirm Christ as Lord, who "sits at the right hand of the Father", we affirm our faith that, in spite of human sin and all its painful consequences, God is and will be victorious over all the forces of evil and over death itself. This is the basis of the "good news" and of the ministry and mission of the church.

161. We also affirm that just as in his earthly life Christ gave himself to the world and accompanied his disciples with prayer on their behalf, so today he continues to intercede for us. Jesus Christ who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, is our advocate, the high priest who always lives to make intercession for those who draw near to God through him and who is able for all time to save them. Correspondingly, in Christ's name, in and through him, Christians offer their intercessions to the Father, joining their prayers with his and thus sharing his priestly ministry.

162. The Lordship of Christ is an event which demands our response. In the Risen Christ we recognize the Servant, The Lord, the Crucified One. He calls us to be faithful disciples, to continue his ministry of loving service, to take up our cross and to suffer for his sake. It is in so doing that we participate in the new creation which begins with the resurrection of Christ. Christians proclaim that the forces of death and evil have been defeated, that Christ now reigns with the Father, and that God's kingdom of peace, justice and love is already becoming manifest. This affirmation seems to be in strong contrast to human experience in a world in which we know evil and suffering

in many forms, and in which all life ends in death. In the light of such experience Christians may repeat Job's questioning of God. But faith in the resurrection and in the power of the Resurrected One gives us a new perspective from which to view our experience in this world. It is in spite of evil, suffering and death that we proclaim Christ as Lord.

163. Today we still await the fulfilment of Christ's victory and reign, but with the eyes of faith we see signs of the new life of the resurrection present in our midst, wherever new life breaks into the old. We recognize resurrection signs in the lives of men and women who fearlessly commit themselves to follow the Crucified One, and in the witness of the many confessors and martyrs of every age. We experience foretastes of resurrection whenever faith, hope and love in Christ lead us to openness towards a new sense of community, healing, reconciliation and genuine liberation .

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead

164. In proclaiming that "Christ will come again" we affirm our faith that history will not end in chaos, but that it will end in the One in whom it had its beginning, the One who is the Alpha and the Omega. We recognize that there is a tension between the inauguration of the Kingdom in Christ and its final fulfilment, but we believe that the new creation begun in Christ will also be fulfilled in Christ. We understand this as an all-inclusive fulfilment, for our individual justification and salvation is only part of the longed-for redemption of the whole creation. Thus Christians wait in eager hope for the final fulfilment and consummation of God's offer of new life, which is given to our world and history in the resurrection of Christ, the crucified Lord.

165. The coming again of the Lord is believed to be "in glory". That means that he will come triumphantly in the power and authority of God for the judgment of the world but also to grant the faithful the transfiguration of their lives by participating in God's glory so that the promised day of rest will finally be established and that the joy of creation and redemption will be fully shared by the faithful followers of Christ.

166. As Christians we are united in our conviction that we all have to appear before the judgment of Christ. There are different emphases in the New Testament witness of how the judgment will occur. The proclamation of Christ as the judge needs to be balanced by the recognition that Christ is the advocate who pleads on our

behalf as we stand before the Father, and is himself the sacrifice for our sins. But not everything in our present life can survive in the presence of God (cf. 1 Cor. 3:13-15).

Commentary:

There are, however, differing opinions about the time and manner of Christ's return and of the judgment. There are some who emphasize a realized eschatology, in which judgment is primarily a present experience, while others have a more apocalyptic understanding, emphasizing the end-time and the judgment yet to come. Some stress an individual resurrection of the dead following the death of each individual; others emphasize the judgment which will occur only with the universal resurrection at the end of time. This diversity of Christian understanding reflects a diversity within the interpretation of the New Testament writings.

167. The temptation of Christians is often to set ourselves up in judgment of others, or to desire a divine judge who will judge according to our will. However we believe that the Good News is that we are not called upon to judge. This does not mean that we are to refrain from creative social criticism and political action. But judgment is God's prerogative and will take place according to God's will as revealed in Christ. As such, it may well have outcomes different from those which we expect and desire.

168. As far as God's judgment of us is concerned, we agree in our belief that, however much righteousness and love may be in tension in human life, the full witness of the Bible is that in God they cannot be separated. We are not righteous, but our judge is the righteous one. We cannot abdicate our human responsibility for our sin, but we face our judgment trusting in God's merciful and forgiving love, revealed to us in the Christ who himself has gone through suffering and vindication, and teaches us to love our enemies.

His kingdom will have no end

169. The Risen Christ is exalted to the right hand of the Father, wielding the power of his kingdom. Although this will become apparent only at the time of his second coming, the church affirms it as a reality even now, hidden from our eyes, but nevertheless effective.

Commentary:

During the first centuries there were different opinions as to the duration of that kingdom of Christ. The so-called "millenarianists" dreamt of "a thousand years" when, on his second coming, the saints would rule over the world together with Christ. This opinion (cf. Rev. 20:1-6), rooted in Jewish apocalyptic expectations, could call upon the apostle Paul who in 1 Cor. 15:28 said that in the end the Son will return his kingdom to the Father. It seemed that this presupposed a period of messianic rule distinct from the eternal kingdom of the Father himself. But such an interpretation neither understands the true character of Jesus' kingdom, nor its relation to the Father.

170. From the beginning of his earthly mission, Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of the Father (Mark 1:15). His activity meant that the kingdom of the Father became a present reality among the people, "in their midst" (Luke 17:21; cf. 11:20). Thus his own kingdom can never be anything else than to prepare and bring about the kingdom of the Father. This precisely is his kingdom: to persuade and lead everyone and everything into submission to the Father, like the Son submits himself to the Father. Christ the king does not seek his own rule, but that of the Father, and therefore his kingdom "will have no end" (Luke 1:33).

Commentary:

To confess the kingdom of Christ entails a polemical as well as a constructive relation to the kingdoms and empires of this world. Polemically, it implies criticism of systems and ideologies - Ideologiekritik - with the unmasking of the false claims to permanence made in every kind of imperialism. World history - even church history - has produced so many "kingdoms" designed to last a "thousand years" or to have "definitive validity" - totalitarian entities, in fact, which have been experiments gruesome in their results. In politics the Christian is helped by the sobering yet also encouraging knowledge that only God's kingdom - the kingdom of his "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17) - is without end. Then again constructively, it implies an appeal to an exemplar and to a set of criteria: the kingdom of God does have relevance for the temporal kingdoms of the world, for, provisional as they are, they have in it the model for their future development, given what will be expected of them by

the coming Judge. World history may not be intrinsically world judgment but it should be moulded with that judgment in mind - that is, in the light of the kingdom of the Pantocrator, the Ruler of all.

171. "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

PART III

WE BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE CHURCH AND THE LIFE OF
THE WORLD TO COME

A. THE HOLY SPIRIT

172. Christian faith and its confession are only possible in the power of the Holy Spirit, the giver of life. Because the God whom we confess in the Creed is revealed as a triune God, faith in the Holy Spirit is never to be isolated from faith in the Father and in the Son. As Lord and giver of life, the Holy Spirit enables our communion with the Father and the Son and is, therefore, fundamental to Christian faith, life and hope.

173. Faith in the Holy Spirit is also fundamental to our understanding of the Church, to our confession of one baptism for the remission of sins, and to our expectation of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. In the Church the Holy Spirit is never experienced, confessed or worshipped apart from the Father and the Son.

174. There are many challenges to the confession of the Holy Spirit today. Among them the most pressing are the relation of the divine Spirit to human spirit and consciousness in Judaism, the question of the activity of the Spirit outside the church, the criteria for the discernment of the activity of the Spirit within the church and the filioque controversy.

I. THE CREED AND ITS BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

(a) The text of the Creed

175. "We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father.
Who, with the Father and the Son,
is worshipped and glorified.
Who has spoken through the Prophets."

(AC: "I believe in the Holy Spirit.")

176. When in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed the Fathers of the church confessed their faith in the Holy Spirit, they were receiving the faith transmitted since the apostolic age. They were also influenced in their confession by the questions relating to the Holy Spirit of several Christian groups and even by the denial by some

of the divinity of the third person of the Trinity. They were also concerned with clarifying the common faith of the church which was already confessed either implicitly or in a variety of expressions, especially in the liturgical life.

Commentary:

The Creed does not call the Holy Spirit "God" as it does the Son when it refers to him as "true God of true God". The Creed does not use, as does later theology, the term homousios to describe the identity of divinity between the Holy Spirit and God the Father, as it does to describe the identity of divinity between the Son and the Father. There are several reasons for this: the desire to use scriptural words; to avoid confusion of the Holy Spirit with the Son of God through the use of the same terms, and to make it easier for the Creed to be understood and accepted in the churches. In using the title "Lord" for the Holy Spirit, however, the Creed affirms that the Spirit's divinity is exactly that of the Father and the Son which was defended through the use of the term homousios. Thereby the church establishes its doctrine of the Holy Trinity of three divine persons (or hypostaseis) - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - in the perfect unity of one and the same divine being (ousia).

(b) Biblical foundation

177. The first Christian generation affirmed the Holy Spirit as the one by whom Christ was conceived, who was with Christ during his whole life and ministry (cf. Mt 3:16; 4:1; Lk 4:14) and who was given by the risen Lord (Jn 20:22; cf. 7:39; 16:7). They acknowledged that this was the same Spirit who was at work in the Old Covenant, who spoke through the prophets, anointed the kings of the people, and inspired the prayers of the faithful. In the same way they experienced, understood and proclaimed the event of Pentecost as the pouring out upon them of that same Spirit, the Spirit of the eschatological times already announced by the prophets of the Old Testament (Acts 2:16-21). The New Testament shows clearly that this gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is the source of the life of the church and that in the power of the same Spirit through baptism Christians become members of the church.

178. While taking up in this way the Old Testament witness to the Spirit of God, the Apostolic Church realized, in the light of its faith, that the Spirit, active in history, was not an impersonal power. According

to their understanding the Divine Logos made flesh in Jesus Christ is a person so they also confessed that the Holy Spirit is a divine person. The Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son, is active in the economy of salvation (Rom. 1:3-5; 8:14-17).

II. EXPLICATION FOR TODAY

Belief in the Holy Spirit

179. To believe in the Holy Spirit is to affirm that the Holy Spirit is living and acting in the church, the community of believers who confess Jesus as "Lord", and who, thereby, receive the Spirit's varied gifts (1 Cor. 12:3-11). Moreover, belief in the Holy Spirit implies that God's power is present in the world.

Commentary:

Christians differ in their understanding concerning the activity of the Holy Spirit outside the church. Some would claim it is only within the Christian community that the Spirit of Christ is active. Others would claim that "whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just" (Phil 4:8) in the life and actions of non-Christians and unbelievers is of God's Holy Spirit, and yet others that the sovereignty of the Spirit in history is hidden from our eyes.

180. The Spirit of God is holy because the Spirit belongs to the eternal being of the Trinity, the totally Other, and acts in the economy of salvation to bring humanity into communion with the Holy being of the Triune God. To have this communion, without which no person can find life and salvation, is a gracious gift of God.

181. The Holy Spirit is described in Scripture as God's very breath (cf. John 20:22-23), God's living and life-creating power, truth and love. The Holy Spirit is not one of the many spirits which are supposed to inhabit the universe. The Spirit is opposed to every form of material and spiritual evil. Through the Holy Spirit the created world is sanctified by God's grace. Apart from the Holy Spirit things become carnal and dead.

The Lord

182. In confessing the Spirit as Lord, the church acclaims the divinity of the Spirit and acknowledges the lordship of the Spirit over all creation and history. As a divine person the Spirit is one with God the Lord (Theos Kyrios), one with Christ the Lord (Christos Kyrios).

183. The Spirit's lordship is not a lordship of brute force, oppressive power or tyrannous manipulation. It is, on the contrary, a lordship which frees all creation and grants "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (cf. Rom 8:21). Evil spirits possess. Spiritless flesh enslaves. Wicked powers oppress, dominate, manipulate and exploit. The person of the Holy Spirit is a power for the liberation of men and women, even from the most oppressive and enslaving forms of human sin: a power which enables them to resist the evil and to work to overcome it.

Giver of Life

184. The Holy Spirit is the "giver of life" (zoopion). Without the gift of the Spirit nothing would be alive. Humankind itself, indeed all that exists are alive because of the gift of the Spirit of God. So it is that Christians are called to respect the life of all creatures, the animals, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea to whom they are related in God's creation. It is in this context that men and women, in the image and likeness of God, are called to exercise dominion over the created world. They are to respect, defend and preserve the integrity of creation disrupted by the pollution and exploitation of nature and the violation of human rights. Life always remains a gift of God (Ps. 104:29, 30).

Commentary:

There is need to re-affirm our responsibility for the integrity of creation while avoiding the simple identification of natural life with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, dwelling in God's creation, gives a quality to the world but the Holy Spirit is neither identical with biological life nor to be identified with human consciousness as was sometimes the case in nineteenth century philosophy.

Even apart from the pollution and exploitation of nature by human beings, the creation has been subjected to futility, and to the bondage of decay (Rom. 8:21).

185. The Spirit also gives the new life in Christ: human beings are born anew and the whole order of existence is transformed into the first-fruits of the new creation, the beginnings of the new heavens and the new earth (cf. Rom. 8:11; 2 Cor. 5:17). The Spirit in baptism brings to birth new children of the Father, in the one Son, whose own humanity he has already filled with life. In this way the Spirit is in baptism the source of a Spirit-enlivened church, the living Body of Christ.

Commentary:

Because God's Spirit (Ru'ah) is feminine in Hebrew and related languages, some contend that the Holy Spirit must be considered somehow as a "feminine principle" in God, and be referred to as "she". The churches, however, affirm the scriptural imagery with its symbolic analogy and the use of metaphorical language, while retaining the masculine or neuter gender as traditionally used.

186. In creation, redemption and sanctification acting by his Son and Spirit God fills all things and opens his divine life to all to become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:3-4). In this way believers enter into communion with the Triune God. Those who by the power of the Holy Spirit remain "faithful unto death" will receive "the crown of life" (Rev 2:11).

187. Through the proclamation of the Gospel and the celebration of the sacraments the Holy Spirit is creating and sustaining the faith of God's people. The Spirit pours out an abundance of charisms. These charisms are for the building-up of the church and for service in the world, through teaching, prophecy, healing, miracles, tongues and the discernment of spirits (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27-30). In some churches the gift of charisms is specifically connected with the sacrament of chrism.

Commentary:

While there is broad agreement that the gift of the Spirit is inseparable from baptism, some churches, groups and movements, which understand the gift of the Spirit to be a separate and distinct work of grace. For them there is no assurance of the full presence of the Spirit and its charisms in the ordinary gifts of faith, hope and love. Therefore they look for certain special charisms such as the gift of speaking in tongues or of healing, as the Spirit "completes" the blessing received from God. Indeed, such charisms are earnestly to be prayed and hoped for as the "privilege" of every child of God. Others emphasize that different charisms are given to individual members of the church. Although the churches are not yet one in their understanding of the relation of the Spirit's gifts to baptism, all believe that the gifts of the Spirit must not become occasions for church disunity, but are given to individual believers for the common good of the church (1 Cor. 12:7) and thus rightly should serve to strengthen the unity of the one body to which we are called in the one baptism (Eph. 4:4-5).

Procession from the Father

188. The Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father". The Father is also the Father of the Son. The Spirit who is breathed forth is always in relation to the Son. He is so even in the breathing forth. The affirmation of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father includes a profound understanding of the relation between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The dissociation of the Holy Spirit from the work of Christ in the economy of God's salvation is to be avoided.

189. Despite the controversy created by the introduction of the term filioque by Western Christians to express this latter relation, both, Western and Eastern Christians, have wished to be faithful to the affirmation of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, and both agree today that the intimate relationship between the Son and the Spirit is to be affirmed without giving the impression that the Spirit is subordinated to the Son. On that affirmation all Christians can agree and this enables an increasing number of Western churches to consider using the Creed in its original form.

Commentary:

Western Christians have used the term filioque, which was not part of the original text of the Creed because they insisted that the procession of the Spirit should not be conceived without a relationship to the Son. Eastern Christians have found most interpretations of its meaning unacceptable and so have stressed that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone. Thus, Eastern and Western Christians have come to express the one faith they share, even their understanding of the one original Creed they share, in differing ways. On the foundation of this common faith they are seeking ways to explain these different understandings to each other that are faithful to their original common confession. This process of explaining and learning from each other will take time but it has begun (cf. Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ. Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy, ed. L. Vischer, Faith and Order Paper No. 103, SPCK London/WCC Geneva 1981). As they, through His life-giving power, proceed on this path of mutual understanding they should confess together the Creed as their forebears did, in the original form.

Worship and Glorification

190. The Holy Spirit of God "together with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified". So it is that the most basic Christian prayer is glory and praise of the Triune God. Spirituality is only fully and maturely Christian when it is trinitarian. So Christians in their daily life and especially in their worship pray that the Father send his Spirit that they might be more completely conformed to the life of Christ the Son (cf. Rom. 8:29).

191. In turn Christians reject any claims about the activity of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals or communities which would suggest that the Spirit acts independently of the Father or the Son. All churches are convinced that, together with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is active in the revelation of God's design and his saving action. Similarly because they also believe that the Holy Spirit is the life-centre of each Christian, every time they praise and glorify God they praise the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. Furthermore, some churches which have not placed much emphasis on trinitarian spirituality, or prayer for the gift and action of the Holy Spirit (epiklesis), are now rediscovering this dimension of Christian life and worship. It is a Christian custom to begin and end worship services in the name and with the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Christians, therefore, glorify the Triune God through prayer, common worship and the daily service which is their acceptable sacrifice (cf Rom. 12:1f).

The Spirit and the Prophets

192. The Holy Spirit "has spoken through the prophets". In this affirmation the church, which is in continuity with the People of God of the Old Covenant and is at the same time the People of God of the New Covenant, insists that God's Spirit who anointed Jesus is given to his disciples is the same Spirit who inspired both the prophets of Israel and the canonical Hebrew scriptures. The Jewish people have continued through the centuries, on the basis of their tradition to listen and to respond to God's Spirit speaking through these scriptures. Christians, likewise, continued to be confronted by the Spirit through the prophets. In this, hope is given that the Spirit of God will draw both communities closer together by his continuing activity (Rom. 11:29-32).

Commentary:

The confession that the Holy Spirit "spoke through the prophets" rejects any position among Christians, whether in the past or in the present

which would deny that the God of the prophets is the same God as the Father of Jesus Christ. In our time many Christians have been led to reconsider the traditional attitude of the church towards the people of Jewish faith. It is recognized that the Hebrew prophets announced an eschatological coming of a Messiah who above all would renew the face of the earth. In view of this proclamation the Messiahship of Jesus has been understood by Christians as the means chosen by God for the realization of the renewal of humanity. Christians and Jews might be able to come nearer to each other by studying their respective eschatological expectations of God's final Kingdom and by seeking ways of common service to humankind in this perspective.

193. Christians believe that Jesus is the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy and is himself God's anointed prophet upon whom the Holy Spirit rested in a definitive way (cf. Acts 3:22-23; Deut. 18:15). Breathing the Holy Spirit upon his disciples, Jesus transmitted to his Church the gift of prophecy (cf. Rom. 12:6). Everything the Holy Spirit inspires, is bound to what God the Father has done in his Spirit-filled Christ.

194. The affirmation of the Creed that the Spirit spoke through the prophets does not deny the Christian belief and experience that the gifts of prophecy are still bestowed today. These gifts are expressed in manifold ways; in those who proclaim a specific word of God in situations of oppression and injustice, also by those who edify the Church in its worship service, and by those who in some churches are involved in forms of charismatic renewal. The suffering of prophetic witnesses will always be part of the Church's life and service to the world. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Not everyone who claims prophetic gifts, however, is necessarily inspired by the Holy Spirit. The gift of discernment remains to be exercised by believers since "the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets"

(1 Cor 14:32; cf. also 14:22). The confession of Jesus Christ as Lord, according to the Apostle Paul, serves as the decisive criterion of distinguishing the spirit of God from other prophetic spirits (1 Cor 12:3). In the history of the church additional criteria drawn from the biblical witness and the tradition and confession of the church have been employed as required by specific situations and challenges (cf. for example 1 John 4:2-3).

Commentary:

In the history of the church different forms of prophecy occurred and different meanings of the word "prophet" were given. In the New Testament scriptures references are made to prophets and prophetesses (1 Cor. 12:28-29; Acts 15:32, 21:9-10). Later history tells of wandering prophets (Didache), and of prophecy in congregations (Hermas, Irenaeus, and others). It was probably the Montanist crisis (2nd century) which dealt a heavy blow to "ecstatic" prophecy in the Church which for the Fathers who wrote the Creed was no longer a living reality. After this period this kind of prophecy was largely a marginalized, though often recurring, phenomenon in Church history until the 20th century, when it became strongly advocated by Apostolic and Pentecostal Churches on the one hand, and the charismatic renewal movements in traditional churches on the other.

B. THE ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH

195. According to the Creed there is an indissoluble link between the work of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit and the reality of the church. This is the testimony of the Scriptures. The origin of the church is rooted in the plan of the triune God for humankind's salvation. Its foundation was accomplished by Christ himself who, by means of proclaiming the Kingdom of God in word and deed, called men and women to himself and sent them out to proclaim the same message empowered by the Holy Spirit (John 20:19-23).

196. The visible institution of the church responsible for organizing the communal life of Christians has become an area of tension and polemic. There is always a pressure for liberation from any authority which cannot immediately be seen to be derived from contemporary experience. A dispute sometimes arises within a church which challenges the traditional structures causing those in authority to react rigidly. Today many churches are confronted with Christian charismatic movements which experience the gifts of the Spirit in various ways. These movements risk either becoming separate or being rejected by the resistance of the institutional church. There are also those who seek to follow Jesus outside the church.

197. The divisions among the churches; the meagerness of the fruits of sanctification borne by their members, despite the riches of the faith which they inherit; the

nationalism, provincialism, and confessionalism which prevent the churches from truly living the concept of catholicity which they present to the world; the lack of consciousness they sometimes have of their common origin in the apostolic church: all this is a challenge for the churches to renew their faith in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Commentary:

The progress of the third article of the Creed from belief in the Holy Spirit to the church indicates the integration of the church's reality in the work of the Spirit thus preventing the church from becoming an isolated entity.

The Lima document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry implies an ecclesiology not explained in any appropriate chapter of the text itself. The Faith and Order programme on The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community begins with a study of "The Church as Mystery and Prophetic Sign". It is becoming necessary to define, in accordance with the Creed, what we mean by "the church".

I. THE CREED AND ITS BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

(a) The Text of the Creed

198. "We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church."

(AC: "I believe in ...
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of Saints".)

199. In reflecting on the richness and live-giving power of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, the apostolic community realized that this gift was not only for the salvation of individuals but was intimately connected with the destiny of humanity as a whole. For them what they called the church was that part of humanity seized by the creative and redemptive power of the Spirit. They also realized that it was through the preaching and witness of the Christian community that the Good News of salvation was offered to all people till the end of time. The confession of Christ's cross and resurrection accordingly leads to the confession of the Holy Spirit, who brings together and builds up the church on the foundation of the same redemptive act in the cross and resurrection.

200. The indissoluble link between the inner reality of the church and the work of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit is therefore essential for the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The richness of the biblical witness concerning the church made it necessary in the development leading to the formulation of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed to indicate this richness with the help of the four attributes: one, holy, catholic and apostolic which are closely interrelated.

(b) Biblical Foundation

201. The New Testament takes up and elaborates the Old Testament concept of "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people", in applying it to the church and its calling to "declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of the darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:5, 9; cf. Ex 19:6), linking thus the ekklesia of the new covenant with its beginning and model of the qahal of the old. Both are chosen to serve as agents of God's will for humankind as a whole.

202. The church finds its origin in Christ, proclaiming the Gospel. It was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being himself the corner-stone (Eph. 2:20). It was made manifest in the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:7-20), on the cross (John 19:25-27), in the resurrection (John 20:19-23) and in the ascension (Matt. 28:18-20). At Pentecost the church received its fulness by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13). It shares and continues the work of Christ on earth. It is the creation and the vehicle of the Holy Spirit in the world.

203. Each of the several images which the New Testament uses to speak of the church (God's people, building, vine, spouse, etc.) has its own importance, but particular attention has been given in the tradition to that of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22-23). This expression underlines the intimate, organic relationship which exists between the living Lord and all those who receive their living hope from him. It also points to the integral unity of the community of believers, as it is constituted in and by him.

II. EXPLICATION FOR TODAY

The Church and the Trinitarian Communion

204. The church is the community, local and universal, of those people who believe in Christ, who are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. It is the community of those who

are in communion with Christ and, through him, with one another. A community of those who desire to persevere in a life nourished by the Word of God and the sacraments, and who are consecrated to the witness and service of the Gospel in a communion of love through the power of the Holy Spirit. In its historical and human form the church is constantly called and empowered by God to a renewal of its life and mission. The Father wills it as the people of his possession; the Son offers it as his living Body; the Spirit gathers it into a unique communion.

205. This community finds its full manifestation wherever people are gathered together by word and sacrament in obedience to the apostolic faith. This local church is fully the church of God when all it preaches, celebrates and does is in communion with all that the churches in communion with the apostles preached, celebrated and did, and with all that the churches here and now are preaching, celebrating and doing in communion with the apostles. In this way the universal church consists in the communion of local churches.

206. The life and unity of the church are grounded in the communion of the Trinity. It is "the people united by the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Cyprian, *De Orat. Dom.* 23). Different local churches and their members should enjoy unity in the same faith and life reflecting the trinitarian communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Commentary:

Sometimes Christians have difficulties in receiving each other's statements about the church simply because they use the word "church" differently.

In the Eastern Christian tradition the church is predominantly seen in terms of the divine mystery of being-the-church so that the perfection of the Church, known only by faith, dominates the orientation and renders it practically meaningless to speak of a church sinful, imperfect, in need of change, etc.

In the Western churches it is more common to link statements of faith and statements of observation - the church as divine mystery, and the Church as human community - in a dialectical language of divine and human, thus expressing the tension of faith and observation in one unified conceptuality.

This difference certainly implies less substantial theological disagreement than it immediately seems to do. However, the question remains whether it indicates some wide-ranging difference in the basic direction of ecclesiological orientation.

The Church, People of God

207. Throughout Scripture, God chooses a people to serve with and for him to the benefit of the whole of humankind. This is precisely the vocation given to the church in Jesus Christ. In bringing the world the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ, the church does not isolate itself from its environment. Rather, in its particularity, it serves God in solidarity with the whole of humankind.

208. Through faith and baptism men and women are incorporated into the church as God's people. At the same time it should be borne in mind that only the Last Day, which makes all hidden things visible, will make clear who really belongs to the people of God and who does not. The boundaries of the church are known finally only to God.

209. The church is both mystery and sign. It is the means of God's active and transforming presence in the world (cf. Church - Kingdom - World. The Church as Mystery and Prophetic Sign, ed. G. Limouris, Faith and Order Paper No. 130, WCC, Geneva 1986, Chapters III and IV). As proclaiming the Word of God and celebrating the sacraments, the church does not only exist for itself, but also for the world God desires. It is not a fortress in which people can enclose themselves for a life of security, but a servant people spread throughout the world, sent in missionary outreach to sow the good seed of the Word and to bring Christ's love to all people.

210. The church rejoices in all the signs of the caring work of the Creator which it encounters in the world, in all truth, all beauty and goodness. It is these human values of God's creation which the church offers to the praise of God especially in the thanksgiving of the eucharist, in the hope that these values may be restored in the full transfiguration of the Creator's "new creation". In a world always distorted by sin it is by its life and calling in communion that the church seeks to be a sign to the world which God wants.

The Church, Body of Christ

211. When the New Testament speaks of the church as the Body of Christ, it underlines the basic importance of his incarnation, passion and resurrection (his bodiliness) for the salvation of the world, and recalls the constitutive

role of his eucharistic presence (his body and blood) in Christian life. The veritable fruit of salvation, communion, renewed and re-established between God and humankind, between humans and the world of creation, is brought about and is manifested by the holy mystery of the Body of Christ.

212. The church as Christ's living Body is local and universal, particular and inclusive. Called to serve the Lord through the diversity of its members, the church embodies God's creative Word. The royal priesthood of all the faithful and the diverse ordained ministries serve God in the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. The Body of Christ thus reflects the active presence of the Trinity in the world.

213. The church is the eucharistic community - receiving, sharing and giving thanks - whose basic calling is the glorification of the triune God in worship and service. In receiving the Word of God and in celebrating the sacraments, especially the eucharist, according to Christ's institution, it is called to offer the prayer, praise and worship of Christians, not only on behalf of themselves, but on behalf of all humankind and of the whole of creation and to serve all people in the name of Jesus Christ.

214. This eucharistic vision unites the universality of God's design with the uniqueness of Christ's death and resurrection in the actuality of his sacramental presence. For the Body of Christ is given for and given to humankind. At the same time it enables a comprehensive understanding of the relatedness and unity of "spiritual" and "material" service, of "leitourgia" and "diakonia". The worshipping community is at the same time contemplative and active, receiving and giving, and will so remain until the end of time, when it is taken up into the all-comprehending and all-restoring Kingdom of God.

The Church, Communion of Saints in the Spirit

215. As communion of saints the church unites the faithful of every age and of all places in one fellowship of prayer, praise, and of sharing in suffering and joy. The church is such a communion because all those who believe in Christ are in a true fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and, partaking in the same divine gift, are united together by the Spirit (1 Jn 1:3). It is a communion of saints because all the baptized are in Christ, the holy one. The Spirit brings forth God's community through word and sacrament and equips its members for their service of thanksgiving and praise.

216. All ages, including our own, contribute to the hosts of witnesses and martyrs who in their sufferings "complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church" (Col. 1:24). Their suffering with and for Jesus Christ obliges the whole church to participate with them in concern and intercession.

217. The church is the prefiguration of the Kingdom which it expects and announces. The Gospel it proclaims and the witness it renders invite all people to accept the Good News of the Kingdom. It cannot be subject to the realities of this world always at work in its members, since it is orientated towards the coming Kingdom which it proclaims in word and deed, and which it already experiences. It awaits the glorious return of Christ, its Lord, an expectancy which it expresses most vigorously in its liturgy. Every time two or three disciples of Christ are united, the Lord himself is present in their midst anticipating the Kingdom (cf. Matt. 18:20).

One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church

218. There is only one holy church: it is catholic and apostolic in each place by its faithfulness to God, by its intimate relationship with the Lord, the Head of the Body, and by its communion in the Holy Spirit with all the local churches of God irrespective of space and time.

219. There is but one church. All the baptized are incorporated into one body which is called to witness to its own and only Saviour. The unity of all Christians needs to manifest itself visibly in the unity of the fundamental faith and the sacramental life. The one Holy Scripture, the one baptism, the Creeds of the Ancient Church, the sharing of the one mission with a mutually recognized ministry, and common prayer point towards this visible unity which can be fully accomplished only in one eucharistic communion. This unity does not imply uniformity, but an organic bond of unity between all the local churches in the richness of their diversities. Therefore all the baptized, confessing the one faith, are able to share together in the same sacraments, in particular the eucharist, the sign of their unity in the Body of Christ.

220. The Holy Spirit dwells in the holy church. This church has been set apart by God who is holy and who sanctifies it by the word and sacraments. The holiness of the church signifies the faithfulness of God towards his people: the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Even at the darkest times in the church's history, Christ preserves the essence of its being and service for the salvation of humankind. It is also holy because of the

holy words it proclaims and the holy acts it performs, and because it is a community of sinners, who have been and who are constantly being forgiven. In spite of the sin in the church, when it celebrates the Eucharist and listens to the Word of God it is seized by the Holy One and cleansed.

221. Christ, full of grace and truth, is already present on earth in the church catholic. Even if in each local church the fulness of grace and truth is present, it is only in the whole (katholikè) that each local church finds its true identity. The being of the church in its fulness is gathered and expressed in great diversity through the Christian spiritual life of all peoples in space and time. This fulness of the universal church transcends nationalism, particular traditions and all human barriers. It is a fulness of life. In the life of the church the whole human being and all human situations are enlisted for the worship and the service of God. This fulness is expressed in the worship of the local church, where in spite of the diversity of rites and traditions the whole mystery of Christ is present, as well as in Christian daily life. Where Jesus Christ is, there too is the church catholic, in which in all ages the Holy Spirit makes people participants of Christ's life and salvation, without respect of sex, race or position.

222. The church is apostolic because everything it confesses about Christ comes from the apostles as witnesses, whose testimony to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has been transmitted by the Holy Scripture. In this continuity the church recognizes and lives its fundamental identity with the church of Christ's apostles on which it is built once and for all.

The apostolicity of the church is manifested in its faithfulness to the Word of God, lived out and witnessed to in the apostolic Tradition, guided by the Holy Spirit throughout the centuries, and expressed in the Creeds. It is also manifested by its celebration of the sacraments instituted by Christ and through the continuity of its ministry in the service of Christ and his church which was initially exercised by the apostles.

The Church is apostolic by following the example of the apostles in continuing their mission to proclaim the Gospel which is confirmed by the action and the gift of the Holy Spirit. It witnesses to and serves the reconciliation of humankind to God in Jesus Christ. In obedience to the mandate of Jesus Christ the church proclaims the divine salvation of the world. In so doing it also announces the divine judgment on sin revealed in the cross set in a hostile world, whose powers are still

threatening, even though they have been broken in the victory of Christ. This victory calls forth from the Church a response of conscious self-emptying, the stripping of itself of any exalted status so that motivated by sacrificial love it remains the servant of Christ's mission in the world until he comes again in glory.

Thus the church can fulfil its mission to the world only in so far as it is itself continuously renewed as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Commentary:

The various Christian traditions have differed in their understanding of apostolic succession. Some have put the emphasis on succession in apostolic teaching. Others have combined this with the recognition of an ordered transmission of the ministry of word and sacrament. Others again have understood apostolic succession primarily as the unbroken succession in episcopal ordinations.

In ecumenical dialogues there is a growing agreement that the apostolicity or apostolic tradition of the church is broader than the concept of apostolic succession of ministry, which is a part and sign of that apostolic tradition which it serves. The question as to whether episcopal succession is the most adequate expression of apostolic succession is now at the centre of the ecumenical discussion on ministry (cf. Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM), Faith and Order Paper No. III, WCC, Geneva 1982, Ministry IV, paras. 34-38).

C. THE ONE BAPTISM FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME

223. The church is a communion with Christ himself, through the Spirit, to the glory of the Father. Therefore the sacrament of baptism, by which God receives the baptized as members of this communion, is acknowledged as the one which gives to the faithful the assurance that they share in the mystery of salvation. They share in the covenant with God, in what happened to Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection, in the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost; they believe that they will share fully in the life of the world to come.

224. A main challenge of this section of the Creed is the necessity to relate the eschatological hope to the hopes for our world and time. Another important challenge is the relation between the love of God and the judgment of God (the problem of apocatastasis). A further challenge is the relation between the affirmation of one baptism and the problem of "re-baptism".

I. THE CREED AND ITS BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

(a) The Text of the Creed

225. "We confess one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the age to come. Amen."

(AC: "I believe in...
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.")

226. The use of the term "acknowledge" (homologoumen) here indicates that baptism belongs to the confession of faith, but not in the same way as the three persons of the Trinity in who we "believe" (pisteuonen eis). The church acknowledges only one unrepeatable baptism, which is inseparably connected with the confession of faith in God Father, Son and Holy Spirit (cf. BEM, B, para. 13).

Commentary:

Baptism is an unrepeatable act. Any practice which might be interpreted as "re-baptism" must be avoided.

227. Baptism is the only sacrament of the church mentioned in the Creed, and it is closely related to the forgiveness of sins. The background to this connection is that in the early church baptism was considered as the occasion when our sinful life is radically transformed by a rebirth to a new life which liberates us from our former sinful nature. In the third century the Latin Church provided the possibility of a second repentance, and afterwards a sacrament of penance became institutionalized in all parts of the church. Later on the institution of penance was developed into the sacrament of confession. Even if later on the Church had good reasons to allow for a second and repeated penance, keeping in mind the rule of Jesus that the brother should be forgiven not seven times, but "seventy times seven", there is a continuous importance of the emphasis in the Creed that forgiveness of sins is bound up with baptism.

(b) Biblical Foundation

228. In the Old Testament circumcision was the sign of the covenant of God with his people (in which all the members of Israel were included) (cf. Gen. 17:11-14). References to the saving experience of the people of Israel (e.g. passage through the Red Sea) are used in some cases in the New Testament in connection with baptism (e.g. 1 Cor. 10:1f), while the fundamental pattern for the understanding of baptism is found in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Baptism, therefore, becomes the sacrament by which believers are made members of Christ and his church. Buried with Christ in baptism they will also live with him because of his resurrection (Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:11-12). To confess baptism into Christ is to confess that through Christ who died for our sins we receive together with the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the assurance of a share in his resurrection (Rom. 8:9-11). This confidence implies the hope that in the eschatological fulfilment those who have been baptized and believe will be citizens of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-4) and partakers of the life of the world to come.

229. The New Testament says that Jesus went into the river Jordan and was baptized by John in solidarity with sinners (Matt. 3:13-17). The baptism of Jesus was a manifestation of the Trinity and led Christ along the way of the Suffering Servant (Mark 10:38-40, 45). The New Testament unfolds the meaning of baptism in various images which express the riches of this sacrament. Baptism is a washing away of sin (1 Cor. 6:11); a new birth (John 3:5); an enlightenment by Christ (Eph. 5:14); a reclothing in Christ (Gal. 3:27); a renewal by the Spirit (Titus 3:5); the experience of salvation from the flood (1 Peter 3:20-21); an exodus from bondage (1 Cor. 10:1-2) and a liberation into a new humanity in which barriers of division whether of sex or race or racial status are transcended (Gal. 3:27-28; 1 Cor. 12:13).

II. EXPLICATION FOR TODAY

One Baptism for the Forgiveness of Sins

230. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). By its strong concentration on baptism as the sacrament for the remission of sins, the Creed exhorts us to take our baptism seriously as essentially linked to the beginning of a new life, a decisive and fundamental change in our life history that occurs once and for all. In addition, the affirmation of the Creed reminds us that

even later repentance, confession and absolution should be considered in relation to our baptism, as a reappropriation of what happened once and for all in our baptism. In this way baptism is to be taken seriously not simply as a passing ceremony, but rather one that provides the basis for the continuity of the Christian life, within the communion of the family of God (cf. Eph. 2:19).

Commentary:

Within the ecumenical community there remain differences about the practice of baptism. For example, according to the ancient tradition of the church the sacrament of baptism is linked with chrismation and the eucharist. Later, chrismation/eucharist was assigned in parts of the church to a later point in the initiation process. Differences also still exist as to how traditions discern what is effected in the act of baptism. All are agreed that in baptism by water, conferred in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, there is the activity of God and the response of the baptized. All are agreed that the activity of God is grace in action and that the human response is faith in action. No one denies that prior to baptism God has acted graciously and the human response has begun to be one of faith. The differences begin to emerge when the attempt is made to answer the question more precisely as to what it is that God's grace effects in baptism when it is met by the human response of faith. Some take the view that in baptism there is the moment when God's grace effects the remission of sins and therefore to say that baptism is essentially linked with the beginning of a new life pin points baptism as the moment of new birth. Others say that the moment of rebirth is prior to baptism when there comes an acceptance by faith of the saving grace of God.

Thus the essential linking of baptism with new life means the occasion of baptism which signifies that which has already occurred through God's grace. How far apart are these two views? Traditionally they have been described as taking either a sacramental or a symbolic view of baptism. Has polarisation perhaps produced something of a distortion of both views? Is there not, perhaps, the possibility of a way between what appears to some to be a purely symbolic view on the one hand and to others a seemingly quasi-mechanical understanding of sacramental grace on the other? If all can accept that God has already been acting graciously in some

way to bring the person to baptism, if all can acknowledge that the act of baptism itself is an effective sign of God's grace evoking the response of our faith within the church and that God continues after baptism to act graciously towards the baptized, then the remaining differences need no longer be taken as contradictory.

231. Baptism means participating in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By baptism, Christians are immersed in the liberating death of Christ where their sins are buried, where the "old Adam" is crucified with Christ, and where the power of sin is broken. Christians continue to pray every day "forgive us our trespasses" and to live every day in confidence of their justification. In this sense those baptized are no longer slaves to sin, but free. Fully identified with the death of Christ, they are buried with him and are raised here and now to a new life in the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, confident that they will also ultimately be one with him in a resurrection like his (Rom. 6:3-11; Col. 2:13, 3:1; Eph. 2:5-6).

232. In baptism God anoints the baptized with the Holy Spirit, marks them with a seal and implants in their hearts the first instalment of their inheritance as sons and daughters of God. The Holy Spirit nurtures the life of faith in their hearts until they enter into their eternal heritage (Eph. 1:13-14). The baptism which makes Christians partakers of the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection implies confession of sin and conversion of heart. Thus those baptized are pardoned, cleansed and sanctified by Christ, and are given as part of their baptism a new ethical orientation, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only calls for personal sanctification, but also motivates them to strive for the realization of the will of God in all realms of life.

233. Baptism is related not only to momentary experience, but to life-long growth into Christ. Those baptized are called upon to reflect the glory of the Lord as they are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into his likeness, with ever increasing splendour (2 Cor. 3:18). The life of the Christian is necessarily one of continuing struggle, yet also of continuing experience of grace. In this new relationship, the baptized live for the sake of Christ, of his church and of the world which he loves, while they wait in hope for the manifestation of God's new creation and for the time when God will be all in all. As they grow in the Christian life of faith, baptized believers demonstrate that humanity can be regenerated and liberated.

234. As the one baptism is essentially linked to the beginning of the new life, it happens once for all, must be re-appropriated in the life-long growth in Christ through the Spirit: it must never be repeated. By the one baptism Christians are incorporated "once for all" into the Body of Christ, the one church. Therefore, mutual recognition of baptism is essential for the manifestation of that oneness.

Commentary:

In various contexts the relationship between baptism and membership in the church needs further clarification, especially in light of the following situations, where (a) baptized persons do not participate actively in the life of the church, (b) baptized persons even refuse to become part of the institutional church, (c) persons, who have not been baptized, participate actively in congregational life.

The Resurrection of the Dead and
the Life of the World to Come

235. As first-born from the dead, Jesus Christ is the realization and manifestation of the new humanity. In his life and work, death and resurrection, God manifests the future he intends for the world through the Spirit. In him, life eternal enters our lives, lifting them out of death and into communion with God. The Spirit poured out by the Risen Christ is the seal of our hope which is a hope for what is beyond human capacities and expectations (Heb. 11:1), a hope against hope. Yet, it is a confident hope, because it rests on the powerful promise of God.

236. The church is therefore a communion of hope (cf. The Church: A Communion of Hope, Part V of A Common Account of Hope, in: Sharing in One Hope, Bangalore 1978, Faith and Order Paper No. 92, WCC, Geneva 1978) in the midst of a world that is confronted by death and catastrophe. In the church the reign of Christ is present in the world, where by the power of the Holy Spirit, reconciliation, peace, justice and renewal become realities already attainable. Thus, the church is a sign of God's future for the renewal of humanity. The church also looks forward to the final kingdom that is yet to come, for its own and the world's fulfilment. The church's hope is thus a hope for the world and a trust in God's redemptive promise of faithfulness to his entire creation.

237. The church has one hope: "you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call" (Eph. 4:4). This one Christian hope is related in the biblical witness to the

Kingdom of God, the resurrection, and the new heaven and earth. These aspects of our hope are inseparably intertwined, yet can be distinguished in order to affirm Christian hope in its social, individual and cosmic dimensions.

238. The Kingdom of God is the reality in which the sovereign reign of God is realized by the power of the Holy Spirit through his Son Jesus Christ. Under God's sovereign reign, the forces of evil, sin and death, the principalities and powers of the age (1 Cor. 15:22-24; Col. 2:15 etc.) are overcome through the cross and resurrection (Phil. 2:5-11). Our sins are thereby forgiven and we are freed from fear of the forces of evil. The Kingdom is the fulfilment of the prophecy to Israel (Isa. 11:1-11; Micah 4:3) of the establishment of justice, righteousness and peace, God's will done on earth as in heaven.

239. Already in the Old Testament the death of human beings was regarded as the sharpest existential manifestation of the presence of powers of destruction everywhere in creation. These forces of death are present throughout life and seek to separate us from our brothers and sisters and from God. But death is conquered in the cross and resurrection of Christ. In baptism (Rom 6:3ff) and throughout the Christian life, we participate in Christ's death, in his victory over death in his resurrection and receive his life-giving Spirit. At the same time Christ's death and resurrection and the coming of the Spirit point forward to the final transformation of the cosmos.

240. The focus and basis of our hope for life with God beyond death (1 Thess. 4:13-18; Matt. 25:31ff; 1 Cor. 15:3ff) is the assurance of the resurrection of the dead. Resurrection implies for the Christian faith that after death the human person in his or her integrity has a future and that those who have died with Christ will live forever with him.

Commentary:

The status of the dead between death and the final resurrection has been understood in various ways. Different beliefs about the status of the dead and their relation to the living lead to divergent beliefs and practices in relation to prayers for the dead, intercession by the saints, the invocation of the saints, and a purgatory after death. The idea of the immortality of the soul, important for much of Christian history, has been both affirmed and denied in recent years.

241. Resurrection involves an encounter with the living God and his judgment of good and evil within personal and communal life. It creates a humanity which is accountable to him both now and the final judgment yet-to-come. We believe and affirm that it is not the will of God to condemn and destroy the world he has created. In giving his Son he wants his world to be saved (John 3:17). The apostolic witness explicitly reckons with an outer darkness and the possibility of being cast into it. Such a possibility, however, does not signify a lack of God's will to save.

Commentary:

In the course of history, some Christian theologians and spiritual movements defended universal salvation. In the Bible, the phrase apokatastasis panton ("the time for establishing all") occurs in Acts 3:21, but relates to the final fulfilment of Old Testament's prophecy and hardly implies universal salvation. Mark 9:12 says of Elijah that in the last days he will come again and "restore all things"; but in 9:13 Jesus interprets this as already realized in the ministry of John the Baptist. In 1 Tim. 2:4 it is said that God wants every human being to be saved and obtain the knowledge of his saving truth (cf. also Rom. 11:32). But while this provides a rationale for Christian mission, it does not include a guarantee of universal salvation for those who reject the call to conversion.

In faithfulness to the New Testament teaching, Christian doctrine has to do justice both to the unlimited intention of God's saving love, but also to the many New Testament warnings that eternal damnation is possible. The tension between these different emphases in the biblical witness should not be dissolved by rationalizing one way or the other, but should be taken as indicating the openness of history.

242. The judgment of God is passed through his Son, in unity with his Spirit. "Christ will come as the revelation of truth and righteousness. The ultimate judgment of the world is his, our assurance that the murderer will never ultimately triumph over the victim" (cf. Our Hope in God, Part IV of A Common Account of Hope, in: Sharing in One Hope, Bangalore 1978, WCC, Geneva 1978). Our judge is our Saviour. The God who will judge is the same God who justifies now. This is why the affirmation of final judgment is always linked with the confidence of Christian hope.

243. We will rise in our full humanity. Creation will be radically transformed in ways that are still a mystery. What was perishable will rise imperishable (1 Cor. 15:52). In Christ, God sets forth his "plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:10). Thus the wholeness of creation will not be separated from the final fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. Some elements of creation like the water of baptism, human words proclaiming the Gospel and the bread and the wine of the eucharist are already now used by the Holy Spirit to give us the first-fruits of the Kingdom. In the new heaven and new earth (Isa. 65:17; Rev. 21:1), the new humanity will see and praise God face to face (1 Cor. 13:12). God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28).

Living Our Hope

244. To believe in the life-giving and transforming power of the Holy Spirit, to be the koinonia of God's people in Christ's church, sent to all people to proclaim and live the Good News of salvation until the end of history, to become through baptism for the forgiveness of sins partakers of the new life of the risen Lord and to receive thereby the assurance of sharing with all creation in the life of the world to come - all these are constitutive elements of the apostolic faith throughout the ages. They give Christians today an unshakeable foundation and new perspectives for their involvement in the affairs of this world. This finds its central expression in our Christian hope in the midst of a threatened and finite world.

245. Filled with this hope and despite our own weakness and fears we can live with confidence and trust in the promises of God in the midst of a world that seems closed towards its future. Because the final future is in the sure hands of God, we need not be anxious for tomorrow (Matt. 6:34). We are freed by our hope to work for a more humane and just world. Our faithful pursuit of justice and peace within history cannot bring about the Kingdom, but our work is done in the trust that nothing of what we have done in expectation of that Holy City will be lost. Because our hope is grounded in God, we can take the risk of opening ourselves to the joys and sufferings of the world.

246. Affirming our hope for this world, a hope which is grounded in belief in the Triune God, we reject any escape from this world and its problems. Such escape may take many forms, but it may happen especially by losing ourselves in the accumulation of things or by an other-worldly flight away from the concrete needs of our neighbour.

- Affirming our trust in the future God has prepared for us, we reject any attempt to secure our future at the expense of the world, especially through the threat of mass destruction.
- Affirming the presence of the yet future Kingdom, we reject any understanding of God's coming Kingdom which either separates the Kingdom from this world and its life, or identifies the Kingdom with any historical reality.
- Affirming God's faithfulness to his entire creation, we reject any impoverishment of our hope which blinds us to the wholeness of God's redemption of individuals, of human community, or of all creation.
- Affirming that Jesus Christ with his Spirit is God's Word by which all is judged and its ultimate meaning is disclosed, we reject that the powers that seem to rule history will finally determine its meaning and destiny.

247. In the face of a purely secular viewpoint which does not look beyond itself to God, our hope, active in love within this world while looking to the world to come, is renewed

within the communion of the church through the ever new gift of God's salvation in Jesus Christ, given by the Holy Spirit through word and sacrament.

- In the face of despair over the world, our hope refuses to acquiesce in things as they are.
- In face of growing hopelessness, our hope will declare no situation or person beyond hope.
- In the face of oppression, our hope affirms that oppression will not remain forever.
- In the face of religious perspectives misused to justify political programmes, our hope affirms that the advent of the Kingdom of God is not within our power, but remains in the power of God's surprising initiative.
- In the face of unbearable pain, incurable disease, and irreversible handicap, our hope affirms the loving presence of Christ who can make possible what is impossible to human powers.

248. Our hope for this life and this world is grounded in, and will find its consummation in the vision and joy of God in the communion of saints. In God alone is our trust. All that we have received, we have received from his hand. All that we hope for will come from his blessing. To God be glory from age to age. "He who testifies to these things, says, 'surely I am coming soon'. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:30).

Amen

249. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed ends with the Amen. Already in the Scripture this Amen is used to signify that the people of God receive and by this reception confirm a proclamation. In the early liturgies what had been proclaimed and confessed by the ministers in their specific office in the church of God was so received and confirmed by the whole assembly. Today when the whole assembly proclaims and confesses the Creed together with the ministers, it signifies the communion of the whole church of God in the faith transmitted through the Apostles. The Amen of this assembly expresses the yes to the Triune God revealed to us as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE APOSTOLIC FAITH PROJECT

From 1888 to 1963

The nineteenth century is marked by many efforts towards reaching Christian unity and towards a common expression of the faith. Therefore, one of the first real tentatives on the long ecumenical road leading to the expression of the common faith can be traced back to 1888 when the Third Lambeth Conference summarized the essentials of the Christian faith in the Lambeth Quadrilateral in such words: "... the Apostles' Creed, as the baptismal symbol, and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith" (1).

Later, in 1910, upon the initiative of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA, the Faith and Order Movement was established which focused its work on the call to "all Christian Communions throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour" (2).

Three events in 1920 marked further important steps in a long ecumenical process: In its Encyclical "Unto the Churches of Christ Everywhere" the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople urged the "creation of some form of league of churches" (3). The Anglican bishops, assembled at the Lambeth Conference, issued an "Appeal to all Christian People" for the reunion of Christendom in which they addressed themselves to the question of faith (4). Finally, the preparatory conference on Faith and Order, meeting in Geneva, dealt with "the significance of the Bible and Creed for a United Church" (5).

The agenda of the First World Conference on Faith and Order in Lausanne 1927 already included a section on "The Church's Common Confession of Faith" (6).

At the Second World Conference on Faith and Order, in Edinburgh in 1937, the substantial findings on the question of the common faith were put together in the report on "The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (7).

After the First Assembly in Amsterdam and the creation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, the main concern for the Third World Conference on Faith and Order, held in Lund in 1952, was to ensure that the faith in the one Church of Christ be translated into acts of obedience (8).

The Fourth World Conference, meeting in Montreal in 1963, affirmed that the understanding of the Christian faith was interrelated with issues on "Scripture, Tradition and Traditions" (9).

From 1963 to 1983

Since Montreal, the Faith and Order Commission has steadily continued to pursue the question of the common understanding and confession of the one Christian faith. This became above all apparent in the study on "Giving Account of the Hope that is in Us" which was initiated at the Louvain Commission meeting in 1971 and concluded at the Bangalore Commission meeting

in 1978 where the statement "A Common Account of the Hope" properly claimed the trinitarian faith in God, ecclesiology, eschatology and ethics and the requirement for a consensus on the apostolic faith (10).

At the Lima Commission meeting in 1982, the plan was outlined for the study project "Towards the common expression of the apostolic faith today", emphasizing the importance of the theme in general and of the Nicene Creed in particular for the ecumenical movement of today (11).

But this new beginning had already been prepared by smaller consultations on "Towards a Confession of the Common Faith" in Venice/Italy in 1978 (12) and on the Filioque question in Klingenthal (France) in 1978/79 (13), and in relation with the 1600th anniversary of the Second Ecumenical Council where the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed was adopted, in Chambésy (Switzerland) in 1981 (14), and later the same year in Odessa (USSR) (15) - both meetings examined the ecumenical significance of the Creed of 381. And finally, in Rome in 1983, an international consultation discussed the roots of the apostolic faith in the forms in which this faith was expressed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in the Early Church (16).

In Vancouver, in 1983, the WCC Assembly strongly affirmed the significance and importance of this study (17) and since 1984 it has been steadily implemented.

1984 - 1986

At Crete, in 1984, the Faith and Order Standing Commission decided to attempt a comprehensive explication of the apostolic faith for our time, taking as a starting point the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 (18). Three inter-confessional and international consultations have so far taken place, each considering one article of the Creed:

- Kottayam/India, November 1984: We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ (second article)
- Chantilly/France, January 1985: We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church and the Life of the World to Come (third article)
- Kinshasa/Zaire, March 1985: We believe in the one God (first article).

As a second step a small drafting group met in April 1985 in Geneva, and the Steering Group of the Apostolic Faith Study came together in May/June 1985, Crêt-Bérard, near Lausanne, in order to revise and further develop the format of the reports of the three consultations in order to be submitted to the Commission meeting in Stavanger (Norway), in August 1985 (19).

On the basis of a revised draft text, elaborated in accordance with the Stavanger proposals by the staff in March/April 1986, the Steering Group of the Apostolic Faith study met again in West Berlin, July 1986, in order to review, further develop and share together with the whole Standing Commission in Potsdam, GDR (20), the ecumenical explication. Another meeting of the Steering Group took place in Paris/France in April 1987 in order to finalize the draft explication and to incorporate the comments received from Standing Commission members.

To complete this brief survey, we add the recommendation from the Working Group at Vancouver: "Therefore, the World Council of Churches might ask the churches to recognize anew that integral unity of the Christian faith expressed in the Symbol of Nicea-Constantinople, to reconsider the status of their own teaching in its light, to affirm its content as the basis of more comprehensive church unity, and to strengthen its place in the liturgical life of the churches wherever necessary and possible under circumstances of pastoral responsibility." (21)

FOOTNOTES

1. Lambeth Quadrilateral 1888. See The Five Lambeth Conferences 1867-1908, ed. by Randall T. Davidson, London, SPCK, 1920.
2. Faith and Order Series No. 1 (1910), p. 4.
3. Cf. C. Patelos (ed.), The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement, WCC, Geneva, 1978, pp. 27-33.
4. Henry Bettenson (ed.), Documents of the Christian Church, London, Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. 1963, pp. 442f.
5. Cf. Especially the contribution by A. Scott and J.E. Roberts, in the report of the preliminary meeting at Geneva, Switzerland (12-20 August 1920), in: A Pilgrimage Towards Unity, in: Faith and Order Series No. 33 (1920), pp. 54-72.
6. L. Vischer (ed.), A Documentary History of Faith and Order Movement 1927-1963, St. Louis, Missouri, Bethany Press, 1963, pp. 27, 29, 33.
7. Ibid., pp. 40ff.
8. Ibid., p. 86. The so-called "Lund principle".
9. P.C. Rodger and L. Vischer (eds), The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order, Montreal 1963, Faith and Order Paper No. 42, SMC Press, London 1964, Section II: "Scripture, Tradition, Traditions", pp. 50-61.
10. "The Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith", in: Sharing in One Hope. Bangalore 1978, Faith and Order Paper No. 92, WCC, Geneva, 1978, pp. 243-246.
11. M. Kinnamon (ed.), Towards Visible Unity II, Lima 1982, Faith and Order Paper No. 113, WCC, Geneva, 1982, pp. 28-46.
12. Towards a Confession of the Common Faith", Faith and Order Paper No. 100, WCC, Geneva 1980.
13. L. Vischer (ed.), Spirit of God - Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy, Faith and Order Paper No. 103, WCC, Geneva, 1981.

14. Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith, FO/81:9 (August 1981), mimeographed paper.
15. The Ecumenical Importance of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, FO/81:17 (November 1981), mimeographed paper.
16. H.-G. Link (ed.), The Roots of Our Common Faith: Faith and the Scriptures and in the Early Church, Faith and Order Paper No. 119, WCC, Geneva, 1984.
17. D. Gill (ed.), Gathered for Life, Official Report of the Sixth Assembly, Vancouver/Canada (1983), WCC, Geneva, 1983, p. 48.
18. Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Commission, Crete 1984, Faith and Order Paper No. 121, WCC, Geneva, 1984, pp. 11-19.
19. T.F. Best (ed.), Faith and Renewal. Stavanger 1985, Faith and Order Paper No. 131, WCC, Geneva, 1986, pp. 127-143.
20. Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Commission, Potsdam, GDR, 1986, Faith and Order Paper No. 134, WCC, Geneva, 1986, pp. 41-42.
21. D. Gill, op. cit., Report of Working Group, para. 15.

APPENDIX II

GLOSSARY

Abba (13, 43, 44)*

An Aramaic Hebrew word meaning "father" and signifying greatest intimacy in child-father relationships. It was used by Jesus in the context of his relationship with and prayer to God and became the cause of offence and controversy for the Jewish religious authorities of Jesus' time (cf. Mark 14:36). The early Christians as followers of Christ united with him through the Spirit also used the term (cf. Rom. 8:15 and Gal. 4:6).

Almighty (35, 39, 41, 56, 61)

The Greek equivalent to this term, "Pantokrator", which is found in the original Greek text of the Nicene Creed and which is used in the New Testament, having been adopted from the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) denotes God's power in upholding and sustaining all things and should not be associated with the notion of domination. The Hebrew original "Lord Almighty" = "Adonai Sabaoth" means that God continues to uphold with his powers (energies) all creation. Similar to this is also the meaning of the term "omnipotent".

Amen (249)

A Hebrew word adopted by Christians in every context and language. It derives from a Hebrew root which means "truth" hence its meaning: truly, indeed. At the end of a prayer it denotes not only affirmation but also a wish: "truly" and "let it be so".

Apokatastasis (224, 241 comm.)

A Greek word meaning "restoration" and adopted as a technical term in the context of the Christian doctrine of salvation and especially of the last things (cf. Acts 3:21). It is also connected with the theory of "the final restoration of all things" apokatastasis ton panton, also known as "universalism" (i.e. the view that everybody will be finally saved) which was condemned in the Early Church as heresy.

Apostolic Succession (222 comm.)

A technical theological term denoting historical continuity in holy orders (primarily episcopal, but also presbyteral) going back to the holy Apostles. It is intimately connected with the more comprehensive "apostolic tradition", i.e. the historical continuity in faith, life and mission since the Apostles.

* The numbers refer to the paragraphs in the document.

Begotten not Made (107)

This phrase in the second article of the Creed was designed to distinguish the Logos/Son of God who became Incarnate and appeared as "Jesus Christ our Lord" from all created beings angelic or human. In the early centuries before the Council of Nicea (325) such a distinction had not been clearly articulated, although the thought of it was upheld by the theologians of the Church. The fourth century heresy of Arianism which denied that Jesus Christ was truly God as Son and Word of God led the Church to define this clear distinction which confirmed Christ's true Godhead.

Catholicity (197)

According to its original Greek root this word means totality as distinct from partiality. It denotes the whole, or wholeness, as opposed to a part or parts. When applied to spiritual entities, it also signifies besides wholeness integrity and perfection. When associated with the Church, it retains the notions of wholeness and integrity but is also extended to the notion of universality or ecumenicity. Thus the catholicity of the Church implies not only the integrity of the local churches (see para. 205) in a universal communion but also their inner unity and cohesion due to this integrity.

Charism (187)

This term is based on the Greek New Testament term charisma which denotes "a gift" of the Holy Spirit granted in the context of the Christian life and for the upbuilding of the community (cf. Rom. 11:29, 12:6; 1 Cor. 1:7, 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Pet 4:10).

Christos-Kyrios (182)

The association of the two names "Christ" and "Lord" (Luke 2:11) and of both with the name of "Jesus" is very common in the New Testament. It conveys the belief of the early Christians in the absolute and divine authority of Jesus Christ and implies his unique divine-human status.

Communion ("koinonia") (10 comm., 211, 244)

This term is rich in content and associations. It is used in connection with the Trinity and the Christians' relationship with God and one another in, through and with Christ and the Holy Spirit. It basically means "sharing together" or "having in common". In the case of the Trinity, communion means that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit always act and exist together. They have in common all that the Father has, he has given to the Son and all this the Spirit possesses as well by virtue of being the Spirit of the Father who always abides in the Son. Christian communion is a real reflection of the Divine Communion on the human level, based on the union of the divine and human realities in Christ (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:3, 6, 7). The source of this is the communion with the living Christ through his Word and Sacrament in the Eucharist which is fittingly called "Holy Communion" (1 Cor. 10:16; cf. Acts 2:42). Crucial here is the role of the Holy Spirit in effecting the whole reality of the divine-human communion of the Eucharist and extending it to every aspect of human life. Hence the New Testament speaks of "the communion of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 2:1).

Consubstantial (94, 176 comm.)

This is the English term traditionally used for translating the crucial Greek term *homousios* (from *homou* = together, and *ousia* = substance, being, existence) of the Nicene Creed. It means that the Son or Word of God not only is from the Father but is actually "one in (substance) being" or co-existing (consubstantial) with the Father from all eternity. Not only did the Son not come into being out of nothing (or non-being) but, actually, "there was not (any duration of time or eternity) when he was not". Thus the term "consubstantial" stands for the real and eternal unity in being or existence of the Son with the Father and, as such, complements the other crucial phrase of the Creed, which affirms the Son's distinctive identity in confessing that he is "from the substance (being) of the Father". The term "consubstantial" is not used today as extensively as in the past in the context of modern theology, because "substance" no longer conveys what it did in the past, but is often replaced by the terms "one in being" or "co-existing".

Covenant (177)

"Covenant" or "Testament" ("*berith*" in Hebrew and "*Diatheke*" in Greek) stand for the design or plan provided by God for his relationship with his people. The Giver of the Covenant is God the Father but the actual giving is accomplished through God's Word (Son) and in God's Spirit, though human agents are also involved. There are two basic Covenants (Rom. 9:4; Gal. 4:24; Eph. 2:12; 2 Cor 2:14): the Old One which was given to the People of Israel and whose supreme agent or mediator was Moses (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; Ex. 3:7-10, 16; 14:31), and the New One which fulfilled, extended and replaced the Old One so as to include all peoples and nations and whose unique agent/mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 8:6, 9:15, 12:24). In this new universal covenant God's Word is Incarnate and identical with Jesus Christ, ratified in the shedding of his blood (Luke 22:20; Mt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Heb. 9:20, 10:29, 13:20), and the Spirit of God's promises abides in him and is given through him (Acts 2:33; Gal. 3:14, 22; Eph. 1:13, 3:1-12, etc.).

Creator Spiritus (78)

This Latin form of the phrase "Creator Spirit" is often used by theologians to stress the involvement or role of the Holy Spirit in creation and especially in creating life (cf. Gen. 1:2; John 6:63; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:45).

Diakonia (240)

The Greek New Testament term for "ministry" or "service", which has a wide range of applications within the context of the Christian life, characterizing all of it and particular aspects of it. Christ himself came as a "*diakonos*", a minister who serves (Mt. 20:25) and asked every disciple of his to be such for all (Mark 9:35). St Paul extensively employed this term and in one instance he spoke of the "divisions" (different kinds) of diakonia (1 Cor. 12:5).

Divine Being (10 comm.)

When we speak about the Divine Being or God's Being we mean that which God is. Jewish and Christian theologians are unanimous about the incomprehensibility and indeed unknowability of God's Being, i.e. what God is. Statements like "God is Light", Spirit, good, love... refer to God's Being, but they are not identical with it. None of these names or attributes which are traditionally applied to God are able to grasp fully or define in any way the Divine Being. The great Jewish theologian Philo of Alexandria (1st cent.) who influenced many of the early Church Fathers expressed this point very aptly when he said that God is "anonymous" (has no name) with respect to his Being but "polyonymous" (has many names) with respect to his attributes which are related to his acts or energies. There is a Christian theological tradition emanating from the mediaeval West which identifies God's attributes with his Divine Being. Yet even this tradition maintains that ultimately God's Being is like an incomprehensible ocean. Even the affirmation of the unity of the Divine Being is a mystery which cannot be defined by either numerical or generic categories of human rationality.

Economy (15, 16)

The Greek term "economy" (orig. "oikonomia") originally used by St Paul (cf. 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10, 3:2, 9; Col. 1:25 and 1 Tim. 1:4) denotes the whole plan of salvation revealed and worked out by God in Jesus Christ. The term was extensively employed by the early church theologians and came to mean the Incarnation of the Son of God and all its far-reaching consequences for the salvation of humankind and the restoration of order ("nomos") in God's creation ("oikos"). As such it was distinguished from the term "theologia" which referred to God's unity of Being in the Trinity of Father, Son and Spirit.

Epiklesis (191)

A Greek term meaning "invocation", which is always connected with Christian prayer to God for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Its primary context, especially for Eastern Orthodox Christians, is the celebration of the eucharist and the actual consecration of the eucharistic gifts of the Body and Blood of Christ. It does however have a more general meaning relating to the spiritual life of the Christians.

Eschatological (72)

A Greek term denoting whatever relates to the "eschaton" or "eschata" meaning the "final things" connected with the end of humankind and the world, which are brought about through God's action in and through Christ. In the New Testament Christ is called "the last Adam" ("eschatos Adam", 1 Cor. 15:45), or "the first and the last" (Rev. 1:11, 17, 2:18, 22:13) inasmuch as he has fulfilled in himself through his death and resurrection God's ultimate design for humankind and the world. The period which extends from his ascension to his second coming is eschatological because it is governed by the Risen Christ who is its ultimate ("eschatos") destiny.

Ex nihilo (62, 70)

A Latin term meaning "out of nothing". In Christian theology it is connected with the creation of the world and all that belongs to it. It is God who brings everything into being out of non-being (cf. 2 Macc. 7:28; Ps. 32:9; Heb. 11:3; Rom. 4:17).

Filioque (189)

A Latin term meaning "and the Son" which was added to the third article of the Nicene Creed in the Latin West. This addition became the cause of controversy and division between Western and Eastern churches from the ninth century to the present. Its introduction into the Creed was understood by the East as changing the original doctrine of the single procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father (taken from John 15:26) into a doctrine of "double procession" which affected the traditional doctrine of the Trinity. Modern discussions of Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians with Orthodox have clarified many of the issues involved in the dispute over the "Filioque". Nevertheless the problem has not yet been officially solved, even though some of the upholders of the "Filioque" addition to the Creed are prepared to drop it on certain "ecumenical" occasions or even permanently. For an overview of recent discussions, see Lukas Vischer (ed.), Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Ecumenical Reflections on the "Filioque" Controversy, Faith and Order Paper No. 103, WCC, Geneva 1981.

Homologoumen (226)

A Greek word meaning "we confess" which comes from the verb homologeō (lit. "I repeat the same words" or "to uphold the same faith"). Both in the New Testament and in the Christian tradition it denotes an essential act on the part of the Christians within the Church.

Homousios (10 comm., 94, 176 comm.)

See "consubstantial".

Hypostasis (10 comm., 176 comm.)

See "Person".

Immanence/Transcendence (21, 22)

These two terms have been applied in Christian theology to the theme of God's relation to the world to denote respectively his presence in the world and his being "beyond" the world. In the traditional theology of the Fathers of the Church immanence is connected with God's acts in creation and redemption, while transcendence refers to God's being (cf. "Divine Being" in this Glossary). It is important for Christians to uphold both God's immanence and transcendence, because to separate them would mean to fall into the two kinds of heresy, pantheism (which sees God entirely immanent in everything in the world) and dualism, Gnostic or Deist (which divides God from Creation). The former error leads to idolatry and the latter, to transcendental spiritualism or atheistic secularism.

Katholike (221)

A Greek meaning of "catholic" and used in the Nicene Creed as one of the four essential characteristics of the Church (cf. "Catholicity" in this Glossary).

Kenosis (102)

An important Greek theological term meaning "emptying". It is derived from the pivotal Pauline statement about Christ in Phil. 2:7, according to which "Jesus Christ, being in the form of God ... emptied ("ekenosen") himself by taking the form of the servant and coming to be in the likeness of human beings...". It was employed by many of the early Fathers, especially by St. Cyril of Alexandria, in their exposition of the Incarnation. It was also taken up in the nineteenth century by many Protestant theologians, especially Lutherans, in some distinctive views about Christ which bear the name "kenotic Christologies".

Koinonia (244)

See "communion".

Leitourgia (214)

A Greek term often translated as "liturgy" or "service". It is specifically used with reference to worship and the celebration of the Eucharist (Holy Communion). In its original Greek form it meant "function" ("ergon") of the people ("laos"). In the Christian context it refers both to the eucharistic function of the local church and to its social implications in the Christian community. In the New Testament Christ, the Apostles, Christian leaders and Christians are all called liturgists ("leitourgoi") whose liturgies are distinct but certainly interrelated and coordinated. Closely connected, even identified with this term is the term "diakonia" (see present Glossary) as we can see, for instance in 2 Cor. 9:12.

Local (Universal) Church (204)

See "Catholicity".

Logos (178)

One of the most famous and meaningful Greek words meaning "Word" and applied in the Prologue to St John's Gospel to Jesus Christ, God's Son. No other term has been so extensively used in the early church and subsequently in classical Patristic theology in the context of the doctrines of Christ and the Trinity. Jesus Christ has been understood in classical Christian theology as the eternal Logos (Word) of God (John 1:1) who became flesh (John 1:14) for the salvation of mankind. Christian theology has spoken of the Logos of God in God, in creation, in human being and in redemption. Thus the Christian doctrine of the Logos (like that of the Prologue of St John's Gospel) come to be a way into the entire Christian doctrine.

Messiahship (192 comm.)

This word is based on the Hebrew word "Messiah" meaning "the anointed One" (of God) whose coming is the great expectation of the Jewish people. In the New Testament the term has been used to elucidate the Christian understanding of Jesus' identity and mission. The Christian meaning of the term goes beyond the Hebrew one in affirming that Jesus is the Messiah not only as "the anointed" but also as "the anointing" one. As St Athanasius expressed it, "He as God anoints himself as man so that his human anointing might pass to all human beings".

Millenarianists (192 comm.)

From "millenium" which means "a thousand years". The term denotes those people in the early Church who literally believed that Christ would come again and reign on earth for a thousand years! This view has been revived today among some Protestant groups and by the Jehovah witnesses.

Mystery (209)

The New Testament understanding of this word can be rendered by the phrase "open secret". It denotes a truth which is revealed but escapes total comprehension. Such truths are God's Being (revealed through his acts). Jesus Christ the Word/Son of God, who became man without ceasing to be God, the salvation achieved by Christ and experienced by the Christians, the Church's identity, as both divine and human.

Pantokrator (40, 45-47, 56)
See "Almighty".

Person ("Hypostasis") (10 comm., 176 comm.)

This term in its original Latin form "persona" was applied in the early centuries to the Father, or/and the Son, or/and the Holy Spirit. It was said by Tertullian that in the Christian perception of God there was an arrangement (dispensation) of three persons, and that to faith to admit that meant to fall into the error of "monarchianism" and, in effect, deny the revelation of God in Christ. Monarchianism denied the trinity of persons and identified Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one God and one Person. It took two forms which are known as dynamic monarchianism, represented by Paul of Samosata, and modalistic monarchianism, represented by the greatest systematizer who was the heretic Sabellius. By the end of the 4th century and after the condemnation of Arianism it had been universally accepted among the Orthodox that in the Christian conception of God there is one essence ("ousia", substance, being) in three persons ("hypostasis"). Thus through the clarifications of these terms Christians affirmed both the unity and trinity of God. Modern theologians are faced with the problem of clarifying these terms once again because they have come to mean different things in contemporary secular usage.

Ru'ah (185 comm.)

The Hebrew term for the word Spirit - especially the Spirit of God.

Shechinah (28)

A Hebrew word denoting the "mercy seat" in the holy of holies of the Jewish sanctuary where the glory (Kabodh in Hebrew) of God was rested and revealed. In the Christian Church it has been replaced by the presence of Christ and finds its best expression in the life of the Church in Word and Sacrament

(cf. Ex. 25:17; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:5ff).

Soteriological (72)

A Greek word denoting what pertains or relates to salvation (soteria in Greek). Also qualifies whatever has saving significance.

Spirituality (90)

A modern term referring to the practical patterns of Christian life, worship, prayer, piety. It is especially applicable to the various life-patterns of the ascetics. On the whole it relates to "the life of the Spirit" or "life in Christ".

Theodicy (59, 60)

A Greek term meaning "putting God to trial". A classic biblical case of a theodicy is found in the story of Job. Generally the term refers to the question why there is evil and suffering in the world despite of a good and loving God.

Theos-Kyrios (182)

Two Greek terms often appearing together in the Bible to denote "God-the Lord" or the "Lord-God".

Theotokos (111)

A Greek term meaning "Bearer of God" or "Mother of God" applied to the Virgin Mary. It was extensively used in the Early Church from the second century onwards but became a cause of controversy in the beginning of the 5th century. Nestorius of Constantinople argued in 428/9 that the Virgin Mary could not be called "Theotokos" because she gave birth only to the man Jesus and not to the Son/Logos of God who was eternally begotten from the very being of the Father according to the original Nicene Creed (325). St Cyril of Alexandria argued that in view of Nestorius' explanation one had to apply this term to the Virgin Mary who did not bear a mere man (Jesus) but the eternal Son of God himself becoming also a man by assuming individual human nature from his Virgin Mother. The Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431-3) condemned Nestorius and his position and made the term "Theotokos" a mark of Orthodox Christology alongside the Nicene term "Homoousios". The same doctrine was ratified by the Fourth (451), Fifth (553), Sixth (680/1) and Seventh (787) Ecumenical Councils. Excessive veneration of the Virgin Mary and the rise of Latin medieval Mariology led some of the Reformers and their successors to question a critical or differentiated position concerning Mariology. Modern ecumenical discussions are helping to clarify the old issues and move towards a balanced appreciation of the term "Theotokos".

Torah (28)

The Hebrew word for "law", usually referring to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament.

Typos (111)

A Greek word meaning "model" or even "prototype".

Virginity of Mary (111 comm.)

That Jesus Christ was born from the Virgin Mary is the witness of Matthew and Luke and of all the Church writers in the Early Church and of the Nicene Creed. The Virginity of Mary was understood by the theologians of the Early Church as bearing witness to the Divine Person of Christ and to his truly becoming human without ceasing to be divine. It was also linked with the fact that Christ was the second Adam (Paul) inasmuch that he too, like the first Adam, has not had a human father (notably by St Irenaeus).

PARTICIPANTS IN CONSULTATIONS ON THE APOSTOLIC FAITH PROJECT

Many are those who have contributed in different ways to this study, but the following have participated from January 1981 - August 1987 in a series of international consultations and in the drafting process of the document.

* * * * *

Faith and Order Standing Commission, Annecy/France, 1981

Working Group on "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today":

Rev. Fr Jean Tillard (Roman Catholic Church), Canada - Moderator
Prof. Ivar Asheim (Church of Norway), Norway
Protopresbyter Prof. Vitaly Borovoy (Russian Orthodox Church), USSR/Switzerland
Prof. John Deschner (United Methodist Church), USA
Dr Anton Houtepen (Roman Catholic Church), Netherlands
Prof. Keiji Ogawa (United Church of Christ in Japan), Japan

Faith and Order staff: Rev.Dr William H. Lazareth
(Lutheran Church in America)
Rev.Dr Hans-Georg Link (EKD:United)

**Consultation on "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today",
Chambésy/Switzerland, 28 June - 4 July 1981**

Metropolitan Damaskinos of Tranoupolis (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople), Switzerland
Prof. John Deschner (United Methodist Church), USA
Principal Siggibo Dwane (Church of the Province of Southern Africa), South Africa
Dr Adolfo Ham (Presbyterian-Reformed Church), Cuba
Prof. Gerassimos Konidaris (Church of Greece), Greece
Dr Ulrich Kühn (Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR: Lutheran), GDR
Dr Gregor Larentzakis (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople), Austria
Rev. Dr John Mbiti (Swiss Protestant Church Federation), Switzerland
Prof. Wolfhart Pannenberg (EKD: Lutheran), FRG
Rev. Prof. Samuel Rayan (Roman Catholic Church), India
Rev. Dr William G. Rusch (Lutheran Church in America), USA
Frère Max Thurian (Reformed Church of France), France
Rev. Fr J.M.R. Tillard (Roman Catholic Church), Canada

Faith and Order staff: Rev. Dr William G. Lazareth
(Lutheran Church in America)
Rev. Dr Hans-Georg Link (EKD: United)
(Mrs Renate Sbeghen)

Consultation on "The Ecumenical Importance of the Nicene Creed", Odessa/USSR,
9-15 October 1981

Bishop Mesrob Ashjian (Armenian Apostolic Church of America), Lebanon/USA
Prof. Robert W. Bertram (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod), USA
Dr Ellen Flesseman-van Leer (Reformed Church of Netherlands), Netherlands
Rev. Fr René Girault (Roman Catholic Church), France
Rev. Prof. Thomas Hopko (Orthodox Church in America), USA
Dr Yoshiro Ishida (Lutheran), Switzerland
Prof. Gerassimos Konidaris (Church of Greece), Greece
Prof. Nicolas Lossky (Russian Orthodox Church), France
Rev. Fr Leonid Nedaikhlebov (Russian Orthodox Church), USSR
Rev. Dr Timothy Njoya, Kenya
Dr Kjell Ove Nilsson (Church of Sweden), Sweden
Rev. Fr Victor Petlychenko (Russian Orthodox Church), USSR
Prof. Nicholas Poltoratsky (Russian Orthodox Church), USSR
Prof. V.C. Samuel (Syrian Orthodox Church of the East), India
Dr Martin Seils (Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR: Lutheran), GDR
Prof. Josef Smolik (Church of the Czech Brethren), CSSR
Rev. Prof. Livery Voronov (Russian Orthodox Church), USSR
Prof. Günter Wagner (Baptist Church), Switzerland
Prof. Geoffrey Wainwright (Methodist Church of Great Britain), England/USA

Faith and Order staff: Rev. Dr Hans-Georg Link (EKD: United)
(Mrs Renate Sbeghen)

Faith and Order Plenary Commission, Lima/Peru, 2-15 January 1981

Working Groups and Plenary Commission discuss and adopt plans for the
Apostolic Faith Study.

The Apostolic Faith in the Scriptures and in the Early Church, Rome/Italy,
1-8 October 1983

Rev. Prof. Raymond E. Brown (Roman Catholic Church), USA
Rev. Janet Crawford (Church of the Province of New Zealand), New Zealand
Prof. John Deschner (United Methodist Church), USA
Prof. Kwesi Dickson (Methodist Church), Ghana
Dr Ellen Flesseman-van Leer (Netherlands Reformed Church), Netherlands
Rev. Dr Günther Gassmann (EKD: Lutheran), FRG/Switzerland
Prof. E. Glenn Hinson (Southern Baptist Convention), USA
Mgr Alois Klein (Roman Catholic Church), Vatican
Prof. Georg Kretschmar (EKD: Lutheran), FRG
Dom Emmanuel Lanne (Roman Catholic Church), Belgium
Dr Jorge Pantelis (Methodist Church), Bolivia
Rev. Dr Horace O. Russell (Jamaica Baptist Union), Jamaica
Prof. V.C. Samuel (Orthodox Syrian Church in the East), India
Dr Günter Wagner (Baptist Church), Switzerland
Prof. Geoffrey Wainwright (Methodist Church of Great Britain), England/USA
Prof. Michael Wyschogrod (Jewish Community), USA
Dr John D. Zizioulas (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople),
Greece/Scotland

Faith and Order staff: Rev. Dr Gennadios Limouris
(Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople)
Rev. Dr Hans-Georg Link (EKD: United)
Prof. Todor Sabev (Bulgarian Orthodox Church)
Frère Max Thurian (Reformed Church in France)
(Mrs Renate Sbeghen)

Standing Commission, Crete/Greece, April 1984

Appointment of Steering Group on Apostolic Faith Study:

Rev. Fr J.M.R. Tillard (Roman Catholic Church), Canada - Moderator
Metropolitan Bartholomew of Philadelphia (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople), Turkey
Prof. John Deschner (United Methodist Church), USA
Prof. Ulrich Kühn (Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR: Lutheran), GDR
Rev. Dr Jaci Maraschin (Episcopal Church), Brazil
Prof. Wolfhart Pannenberg (EKD: Lutheran), FRG
Rev. Dr Horace O. Russell (Baptist Union), Jamaica
Mrs Mary Tanner (Church of England), England
Dean Yemba Kekumba (Church of Christ in Zaire - Methodist Community), Zaire

Consultation on the second article of the Creed, "We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ", Kottayam/South India, 14-22 November 1984

Dr Roberta Bondi (United Methodist Church), USA
Rev. Janet Crawford (Church of the Province of New Zealand), New Zealand
V.Rev. Prof. George Dragas (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople), England
Rev. Dr K.M. George (Syrian Orthodox Church of the East), India
Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios (Syrian Orthodox Church of the East), India
Rev. Dr B.H. Jackaya (United Evangelical-Lutheran Churches in India), India
Rev. Dr O.V. Jathanaa (Church of South India), India
Rev. Dr M.J. Joseph (Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar), India
Ms Marianne Katoppo (Reformed Church), Indonesia
Rev. Fr Joseph Koikakudy (Roman Catholic Church), India
Rev. Fr Jacob Kollaparambil (Roman Catholic Church), India
Prof. Ulrich Kühn (Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR: Lutheran), GDR/Austria
Dr Moises Mendez (Baptist Union), Mexico
Metropolitan Mar Osthathios (Syrian Orthodox Church of the East), India
Rev. Dr Rienzi Perera (Anglican Church), Sri Lanka
Prof. Dietrich Ritschl (EKD: Reformed), FRG
Prof. V.C. Samuel (Syrian Orthodox Church of the East), India
Ms Vimla Subaiya (Church of North India), India
Dr Rowan Williams (Church of England), England

Faith and Order staff: Rev. Dr Günther Gassmann (EKD: Lutheran)
Rev. Dr Hans-Georg Link (EKD: United)
(Mrs Renate Sbeghen)

Consultation on the third article of the Creed: "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church and the Life of the World to Come", Chantilly/France, 3-10 January 1985

Prof. Torleiv Austad (Church of Norway), Norway
President Edward Czajko (United Evangelical Church), Poland
Prof. John Deschner (United Methodist Church), USA
Dr Hermann Goltz (Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR: Lutheran), GDR
Rev. Prof. Thomas Hopko (Orthodox Church in America), USA
Prof. Sung-Hee Lee (Presbyterian Church), Korea
Dr Ann L. Loades (Church of England), England
Prof. Per Lonning (Church of Norway), Norway/France
Prof. Werner Löser (Roman Catholic Church), FRG
Prof. Nicolas Lossky (Russian Orthodox Church), France
Dr Lauree Hersch Meyer (Church of the Brethren), USA
Prof. Jürgen Moltmann (EKD: Reformed), FRG
Rev. Dr M.F.G. Parmentier (Old Catholic Church), Netherlands
Prof. Janos D. Pasztor (Reformed Church in Hungary), Hungary
Rev. Fr Michael Putney (Roman Catholic Church), New Zealand/Italy
Dr Michael Root (Lutheran Church in America), USA
Rev. Dr Horace O. Russell (Baptist Union), Jamaica
Mrs Veronica Swai (Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Tanzania), Tanzania
Prof. Evangelos Theodorou (Church of Greece), Greece
Rev. Fr J.M.R. Tillard (Roman Catholic Church), Canada
Dr Wolfgang Ullmann (Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR: Lutheran)
Rev. Prof. Livery Voronov (Russian Orthodox Church), USSR

Faith and Order staff: Rev. Dr Günther Gassmann (EKD: Lutheran)
Rev. Dr Hans-Georg Link (EKD: United)
Frère Max Thurian (Reformed Church of France)
Vikar Dietrich Werner (co-opted) (EKD: Lutheran)
(Mrs Renate Sbeghen)

Consultation on the first article of the Creed, "We believe in one God", Kinshasa/Zaire, 14-22 March 1985

Rev. Fr John K.A. Aniagwu (Roman Catholic Church), Nigeria
Prof. Dan-Ilie Ciobotea (Rumanian Orthodox Church), Rumania/Switzerland
Prof. Sigurd Daecke (EKD: Lutheran)
Rev. Dr Efefe Elonda (Church of Christ in Zaire - Disciples of Christ), Zaire
Prof. Alasdair Heron (Church of Scotland), Scotland/FRG
Rev. Fr. Jonah Lwanga (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria), Kenya
Rev. Dr André Mampila (Roman Catholic church), Zaire
Mgr Monsengwo Pasinya (Roman Catholic Church), Zaire
Dr Kjell Ove Nilsson (Church of Sweden), Sweden
Prof. Peder Norgaard-Hojen (Church of Denmark), Denmark
Mrs Rosemary Nthamburi (Methodist Church), Kenya
Prof. Owanga-Welo (Kimbanguist Church), Zaire
Mrs Mary Tanner (Church of England), England
Dr Günter Wagner (Baptist Church), Switzerland
Prof. Geoffrey Wainwright (Methodist Church of Great Britain), England/USA
Dr Yemba Kekumba (Church of Christ in Zaire - Methodist Community), Zaire

Faith and Order staff: Rev. Dr Günther Gassmann (EKD: Lutheran)
Rev. Dr Hans-Georg Link (EKD: United)
(Mrs Renate Sbeghen)

**Meeting of Apostolic Faith Steering Group, Crêt-Bérard/Switzerland,
28 May - 2 June 1985**

Rev. Fr J.M.R. Tillard (Roman Catholic Church), Canada - Moderator
Prof. John Deschner (United Methodist Church), USA
Prof. Ulrich Kühn (Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR: Lutheran),
GDR/Austria
Rev. Dr Jaci Maraschin (Episcopal Church), Brazil
Prof. Wolfhart Pannenberg (EKD: Lutheran), FRG
Rev. Dr Horace O. Russell (Baptist Union), Jamaica
Mrs Mary Tanner (Church of England), England
Dean Yemba Kekumba (Church of Christ in Zaire - Methodist Community), Zaire

Faith and Order staff: Rev. Dr Günther Gassmann (EKD: Lutheran)
Rev. Dr Gennadios Limouris (Ecumenical
Patriarchate of Constantinople)
Rev. Dr Hans-Georg Link (EKD: United)
Frère Max Thurian (Reformed Church in France)
(Mrs Renate Sbeghen)

Faith and Order Plenary Commission, Stavanger/Norway, 13-25 August 1985

Five Working Groups and Plenary Commission discuss and revise draft
"Explication" of Apostolic Faith.

**Meeting of the Apostolic Faith Steering Group, West Berlin/FRG,
9-12 July 1986**

Rev. Fr J.M.R. Tillard - Moderator
Prof. John Deschner
Prof. Ulrich Kühn
Rev. Dr Jaci Maraschin
Prof. Wolfhart Pannenberg
Rev. Dr Horace O. Russell
Mrs Mary Tanner
Prof. Evangelos Theodorou (new member, Church of Greece)
Dean Yemba Kekumba

Faith and Order staff: Rev. Dr Günther Gassmann
Rev. Dr Gennadios Limouris
Rev. Dr Hans-Georg Link
Frère Max Thurian
(Mrs Renate Sbeghen)

Meeting of the Apostolic Faith Steering Group, Paris/France,
21-27 April 1987

Rev. Fr J.M.R. Tillard - Moderator

Prof. John Deschner

Rev. Dr Jaci Maraschin

Prof. Peder Norgaard-Hojen (Consultant, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark)

Prof. Wolfhart Pannenberg

Mrs Mary Tanner

Prof. Evangelos Theodorou

Dr Morris West (Consultant, Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland)

Dean Yemba Kekumba

Faith and Order staff: Rev. Dr Günther Gassmann

Rev. Dr Irmgard Kindt (EKD: Lutheran)

Rev. Dr Gennadios Limouris

Mr Hinrich Witzel (intern)

(Mrs Renate Sbeghen)

APPENDIX IV

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ: Ecumenical Reflections on the Filioque Controversy, L. Vischer ed., Faith and Order No. 103, 1981.

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Towards Visible Unity. Commission on Faith and Order, Lima 1982. Vol. I: Minutes and Adresses, Section V: Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today, M. Kinnamon ed., Faith and Order Paper No. 113, 1982, pp. 3-119.

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Church Kingdom World, The Church as Mystery and Prophetic Sign, G. Limouris, ed., Faith and Order Paper No. 130, 1986.

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